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ON THE BOULEVARDS;

OR

MEMORABLE MEN AND THINGS DRAWN ON THE SPOT, 1853—1866.

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TOGETHER WITH

TRIPS TO NORMANDY AND BRITTANY.

BY

W. BLANCHARD JERROLD,

AUTHOR OF "AT HOME IN PARIS," ETC., ETC.

VOL. II.

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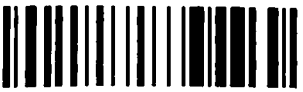
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TWO WAYS OF STARTING A PAPER.

THE art of starting a journal is in its infancy in England. Just as we excel only in roast and boiled in our kitchen, we are great in the art of launching a newspaper only in the way of spending money. We break out into acres of posters; we take a page of the *Times*. We disburse many thousands before we go to press with the first number. We despatch correspondents to every corner of the earth. This is a princely manner of proceeding. There is no expenditure of ingenuity, but the money flows out copiously. The art is plain, simple, rudimentary. Money, we are told, has no master. You may buy that which the ingenious man contrives for himself, without untying his money-bag. Now, the difference between the British speculative journalist and his French brother, is, that the former buys that which the latter coins for himself out of his own busy mind.

I have been amused—shall I say dazzled?—(De-

cember, 1866), by the recent exploits of the two mighty princes of all the departments of *La Réclame!* M. Alexandre Dumas has a redoubtable rival. The diplomatic resources of H. de Villemessant may not be so bountiful as those of the author of "Monte Christo;" but then the editor of the late *Evénement* and of the present daily *Figaro* has both money and brains. Dumas is never so much pleased as when he can show his pockets *à l'envers,* and cry to his readers, "Behold! it has come to this pass with the creator of "Les Trois Mousquetaires!" Not a red *liard* has he, that brave Dumas, who has been your delight so long!" The brave Alexander, to his good credit be it said, never whines. You feel that he is mocking you, while he sets forth his unhandsome predicament.

Fate and the Imperial censorship have combined to start these two potentates of the *petite presse* together in a race for a "colossal circulation." Your readers will remember that the *Evénement* was suppressed, and it died with all the honours a few days ago. *Les Nouvelles* had fallen on bad days, and was at the point of death. M. H. de Villemessant undertook to make a new paper take the wonted fire from the ashes of the old, and to keep the dead

Evénement's readers together under a new banner. M. Alexandre Dumas, having seen two little papers decline and fall under him, undertook a greater task than that of his rival. To make a third paper "he joined the other two!" We have now a daily *Figaro*, instead of the *Evénement*, under M. de Villemessant: and *Le Mousquetaire* (representing the old dead *Mousquetaire* of years ago and the dying *Nouvelles*) under Dumas. The two princes are face to face. One is a scarred soldier, who has seen many a gallant fight, not Captain Pen, but Generalissimo Pen. He is a gay, companionable soldier, with a prodigal's store of anecdote, incident, wit, experience of all parts of the world and all degrees and varieties of men. He is of the country of Rabelais; highly charged with the power of enjoying everything; and, withal, a most moderate man, save in the work he will cast daily from his desk to the printer's devil. He is equal to the highest and the shabbiest fortune. He has been mounted like a potentate, and has had to count his balance of sous! I am not indiscreet in saying so, since I echo only that which it has pleased him to print. Our second doughty knight of the pen is fresh in the field. He is of this present time; a dealer rather than an artist. He may be described

as Jean Paul described a pushing, practical man—"If I see him praying on a Mount of Olives, he is about to build an oil-mill up there; does he weep by the brook Kedron, he is about to fish for crabs, or to throw some one into it." The old battered knight hums on his way to battle; there is laughter bubbling at his lips. He is a poet, even in the country of Corneille. The fresh knight carries in broad letters L. S. D. upon his casque, and his war-cry is "*Abonnez !*" He is jovial, and can do execution with his pen. He can sing "*Abonnez-vous*" to an infinite variety of airs. But he is no match for him who wears "Monte Christo" upon his shield.

Dumas opens his campaign with a declaration that he and those associated with him in his new compound paper, have not got 50,000f. to spend in the way of publicity; but he believes they have 50,000 friends, and he bids this army of readers follow their old leader, and comfort him with a little money. His candour is delightful; it comes upon one like the scent of wild thyme after the bartering of a dusty market. Dumas is a man who wears not only his heart but his balance-sheet upon his sleeve. He tells us how it was that he and the new proprietors of the *Nouvelles* came together, and how his funeral *feuilleton*

on Roger de Beauvoir was interrupted. We are admitted not only to buy the new *Mousquetaire* over the office-counter: the empty cash-box is set before us. We are welcome in the editor's sanctum. The radiant face of Dumas shines through every column. What he did years ago, what he is doing now, what he intends to do, his *grands dîners* and little suppers, his travels and his charities, his cook and his domestic animals, will furnish forth once more the daily fare of his readers. So intimate does the reader become with the life and the schemes of the light-hearted editor, that at last he seems to be conducting the journal himself, and seems to have a direct personal and pecuniary interest in its ups and downs. Dumas has never lost the power of establishing an immediate intimacy between himself and his readers. He keeps no secrets back. For instance, in the first number of his *Mousquetaire* he is good enough to draw a contrast between *his* manner of building up the interest of a story, and that of Sir Walter Scott. He describes Scott's manner boldly. Sir Walter, it seems, wearied his readers with masses of petty details and chapters of microscopic description. Sometimes he would write a volume, nay, a volume and a half, of tedious details about a number of cha-

racters; then the story would break upon the half-exhausted reader, and, as the dramatic incidents happen, the reader would say, "Dear me! that's the man in the green plaid," and "The hero is the gentleman in the pointed shoes," of a hundred solid pages back. This was Scott's manner. Dumas adopts the opposite principle of composition. He secures the attention of his readers at once by startling incidents, and vivid characterisation and description.

At the skirts of Papa Dumas comes dutiful Alexandre Dumas *fils*, with a goodly series of maxims. The maxims are startling. Many of them are ill-natured, and most of them want the "wasp's edge" of the epigram. Take a sample of the startling ones: "Miracles are the *coups d'état* of God!" This is among the best:—"There are people who see no difference between a flag and a livery." I will add one more: "God fishes for souls with a rod; the devil with a net."

In return for these wicked proverbs or maxims, Papa Dumas, addressing M. Emile de Girardin as "My dear Girardin," and dwelling on their close intimacy, proceeds to belabour him, and to give up the columns of the new *Mousquetaire* to the

dissection of the *Supplice d'une Femme.* But the quarrels of authors are the salvation of *le petit journalisme.*

M. de Villemessant opens his campaign not with the least hint of poverty, but with a loud flourish of trumpets. He treats his readers to a long circumstantial account of the state of his great *bureau* on the appearance of the daily *Figaro.* We are admitted to pass in review the gorgeous carriages and the dainty *victorias* which make a dazzling line in the Rue Rossini. Princesses and countesses and celebrated actresses successively respond to the great De Villemessant's war-cry, *Abonnez!* Even the celebrated *comédienne* who had had some differences with the *Evénement* enters the *bureau,* and seeks the director, and coquettes for a truce and a peace. It would seem that on a certain morning all the *beau monde* of Paris gave itself up to the delightful task of subscribing to the new daily *Figaro.* The charming morning is duly and fully chronicled. Even the fruits of the morning's post, in the shape of *abonnements,* are exultingly laid before M. de Villemessant's readers. The daily *Figaro* is, moreover, inaugurated by a work of charity in favour of the victims of the late inundations: all the better

for the inundated. I will not venture to pry into motives. Say our neighbours, at every turn, in their mocking way, "Où la Vertu va t'elle se nicher?" It would seem that in her gentlest and sweetest form she has taken refuge in a *bureau* of *abonnements* in the Rue Rossini.

Let us confess that, beside Dumas and Villemessant, our newspaper speculators are clumsy hands!

SOCIETY UNDER THE SECOND EMPIRE.

WHEN the time shall have come for an historical verdict to be passed on the reign of Napoléon the Third, among the inquiries it will be the duty of the historian to make, will be one into the state of society of the time. He will seek for information amid the light literature of the epoch. He will consult the indefatigable *chroniqueurs*. He will wade through the abundant gossip of Dr. Véron, and he will note the indiscreet revelations of Mané. Timothée Trimm will afford him material. He will find much in the pages of the younger Dumas, in About, Gauthier, V. Fournel, D'Anglemont, Fournier, and others. He will consult the stage of the time; and, finally, he will turn to the daily journals. He will not find the advertising columns uninstructive. He will read how Aspasine was sold to prevent wrinkles; and how, by the use of The Prodigious Water, people of a certain age might impart

to their hair the golden tints of the happy spring time. He will discover a series of rages succeeding each other; and he will mark rapid changes of fashion, not only in dresses, but in the colour of people's hair, and in the complexion of people's morals.

A certain small, sober, cultivated section of French society affects to copy English habits, or the habits that were English. These Anglomanes talk about *le home*, cultivate quiet pleasures, and condemn the fashionable society of the Second Empire as noisy, unrefined, and immoral. They deduct political lessons from the extravagant toilettes, the gaudy equipages, and the troops of *gandins* who are men of yesterday. It is impossible to mix in French society that is not decidedly Bonapartist without hearing the most startling stories about the extravagance of one countess, and the *amours* of another. The Baroness D'A—— has ruined her husband; her last dresses for Compiègne cost 10,000f. The Viscountess B—— has received a reprimand from Court. The Princess C—— is notorious, and has been requested to attend a little more to the *bienséances*. A joke travelled the round of the *salons* of Paris only a few weeks ago, the wit of which did not redeem its

coarseness, and the point of which stabbed the honour of a leading statesman's wife. It is unfortunate for the ruling powers in France that French men and French women will insist upon making the private life of their governors their property. Indeed there is little or no private life in Paris. When a man is not important enough to have his private doings served up by the *chroniqueurs* in the public journals, or even to provide scandal for a neighbourhood, he is thoroughly reviewed in the *concierge's* box. This publicity nourishes the general appetite for scandal. Scandal is in every *salon*, and in every club, and in every *café*. Everybody lives in a glass house, and its transparency does not appear to affect anybody's movements. The general publicity begets effrontery. Ladies against whom the worst stories are told remain in the fashionable world. Let them be rich, and witty, and well-placed, and they have nothing to fear from the malevolent tongues of their neighbours or acquaintance. Who is to displace them, and bid them begone from the presence of honest women? Where are the censors who are to deal with this pleasure-seeking, laughing, spendthrift, audacious throng? The epigrams are fastened on very high places indeed. Scandal is so general, and

covers all society so completely that the splendid subject of the latest damaging anecdote sails into the prefect's or minister's drawing-room, it may be in the character of Aspasia (fancy balls being the rage in a city where many must be delighted to be rid for a time of their own character), the happy observed of all observers! She is welcome, for she is witty—and she is not much worse than many of her friends. Again, her husband belongs to the actual *regime,* and is a grand cross, and is called "His Excellency."

The light heart that pervades Paris society carries off, or appears to mitigate, the sin of the light behaviour that lies behind it. People will not listen to a lecture on morals, nor read prosy books about *le home,* or any other dull Anglican institution. They desire, and will have, amusement; and when they go to balls or to routs they have quite made up their minds to amuse themselves, whether it be at the Tuileries, or *au second* in the Faubourg St. Honoré. Let their acquaintances be good enough to keep up certain forms, which, for the matter of that, all persons of taste will preserve for their own gratification, and they may break any commandment they please at home. This general liberality clears the

ground. The race is open to all comers who can show well-lined pockets. The extravagant have an assured welcome. The lady who invents a new way of spending money becomes a notable presence in the city of Boulevards. It cost a certain great lady £600 sterling for toilettes fit to ruralise at Compiègne with the Imperial Court last autumn, and this for one fortnight! Another queen of fashion has established a reputation for daring eccentricity in her costumes. At the fancy dress balls that were given by the leaders of the Second Empire society during the carnival of this year, one lady appeared as a rainbow, another as fire, and another as the sphinx! We have not, we are told, the animal spirits necessary to do all this, and much more, in foggy England. It is said against us that we make a serious business of our pleasures, and that our London season is downright hard work. But though our balls cannot be compared for lightness or spirit with those of the fashionable society of Paris, we are not quite so stiff and staid as we were—subjects are tolerated in drawing-rooms that had no footing there twenty years ago. They have reached the shores of perfidious Albion from France—acclimatized by travelled ladies. We have the Traviata direct from

the Champs Elysées, where virtuous matrons first drew up in long lines to see her go proudly by with her appropriate scarlet liveries. The dictum that the mere silk for a silk dress stands in relation to the perfect *robe* only as a quire of white paper stands in relation to so many chapters of Hugo's *Misérables*, belongs to the Second Empire, and is in course of adoption in London. Under the Second Empire golden or red hair has become the fashion; the Traviata of last season had golden tresses, and now fashionable ladies pay £5 an ounce for auburn tresses. This is not the only fashion which the polite world of the Second Empire has borrowed from *ces dames*.

Paris society borrows fashions from the *demi-monde*, and the *demi-monde* borrows manners from the extravagant princesses, countesses, and viscountesses. All Paris has been stirred with the Sardanapalian entertainment, which a leader of the *demi-monde* gave on the eve of Lent to the best male society in the Empire. The ladies were all unquestionably from young Dumas' *panier à quinze sous;* but their manners and their toilettes were, we are told, all that could be desired. Mademoiselle, the hostess, did the honours with exquisite grace, and

received into her splendid rooms princes, and dukes, and counts—indeed, all the notabilities who figured at the ball given by Prince Napoleon, or at that of the Foreign Minister's wife. The lace and jewels at mademoiselle's outrivalled the riches worn at the Palais Royal. *Ces dames*, being the leaders of fashion, introduced dresses *style Premier Empire*. The effect of their example soon appeared in the shop windows. Already crowds are about the bonnet-shop windows of the Boulevards and the Rue de la Paix, staring at the bonnets of coal-scuttle pattern which obtained before the battle of Waterloo. Mademoiselle had some English lords and senators among her guests; gentlemen who then enjoyed an opportunity of comparing the fashionable and the *demi-monde* society of Paris, with the heavy and pompous parties that mark our London season. They will have perceived that English fashionable society has imported much from Paris already; and that golden hair may possibly reach the moderate price of £5 per ounce in this country. They will have observed the mutual indebtedness of the lorette and the lady of fashion. Mademoiselle lends fashions and borrows manners.

Who has been the queen of the present season?

Who has been tempted into the highest society of Paris, by rouleaus of bank notes? Who has been *fêted* and made much of in drawing-rooms, by ladies of fashion and their daughters? There is a noisy *café chantant* in the Faubourg Poissonnière, called the Alcazar. Here, while crowds smoke, and drink execrable beer, it has been the wont of a lady with an organ as loud as that of the Dutchman mentioned by Morhoff, who could break a glass with the sound of his voice, to screech, and broadly act, comic songs. Mademoiselle Theresa has furnished the *gamins* of Paris with a rich *repertoire* of slang ballads. Her success has crammed the Alcazar, and has so greatly increased the consumption of Lyons beer in that establishment, that the proprietor has found his advantage in retaining the services of Mademoiselle at something like £3,000 per annum, leaving her, at the same time, free to fulfil any engagements she may have—for private parties. She has many such; for since great ladies do not permit themselves at present to go to the Alcazar, Theresa must be brought to them. Mademoiselle Theresa sails into the company of the Princess B——'s friends, robed in water-green silk, and glittering with diamonds, as though she were "tangled in a swarm of fire-flies." That bracelet, we are told, was given to her by an enraptured duchess.

The brilliants, encompassing that sonorous windpipe, were heaped upon her by a bewitched countess. All eyes are fixed upon her. And she remains unabashed: she preludes at the piano—and then *en avant!* The ladies' ears tingle at first—at the sound of very strange words, given forth at the risk of doing damage to the ceiling. Then there is a titter; and then, when Mademoiselle is most audaciously vulgar, there is a general laugh, and the fortunate lady from the Alcazar is triumphant. The gentlemen move forward to offer the *lionne* their congratulations, and one by one the ladies become familiar with her. We take this scene from the report of an eye-witness. Mademoiselle Theresa has her memoirs, and more copies are sold of them than of the Emperor's *Life of Cæsar*.

Society acknowledges her; and society deliberately copies *ces dames*. The Emperor and Empress patronise the ball at the Opéra Comique, where some of the murkiest reputations in Paris flaunt in diamonds, abashing honest folk, who steal a glance at them from the boxes. Is it all to wind up, as at the Sardanapalian ball to which we have referred, with a *chaine diabolique* and a *cancan d'enfer*, some morning at sunrise? And how much of these last wild measures shall we have learned in England when that time has come upon our giddy neighbours?

THE PALACE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

Nov. 1866.

By the Chateau d'Eau, on the Boulevards—on the site of that wonderfully picturesque group of little theatres, in which so many generations of Paris gamins found delight—a vast edifice, highly ornamented, and with pointed roof and corner towers, is receiving now its finishing architectural touches. The vast proportions of the building, as seen from the Boulevards, lead passers by to imagine that it is some national monument—the palatial home of some public department. It is nothing of the kind. It is, the enquirer is told, the gorgeous birth-place of a new system of trade. Its plan and aspect are to dazzle the world next spring. People of all nations are to flock to it, after they have revelled in the wonders of the Champ de Mars, and are to see in its operations a system that is to regenerate and ennoble commerce. On passing through the grand entrance, the visitor enters a spacious quadrangle. He is under a broad

colonnade. Colonnades stretch along all sides of the quadrangle, and on getting into the open space, he perceives that there are two or three stories of these handsome covered ways. Everything is solidly built in massive stone. The scene suggests the Palais Royal to the mind—a Palais Royal with two or three stories, or tiers of shops. I am told that no less than £400,000 have been already spent on this place of trial for the new idea which is to startle the world next spring. The "idea" appears to have been originated by M. Edouard Alexandre, the famous harmonium builder, of Ivry, and was first applied to the sale of organs for the village churches of France. In this palace it is, we are told, to be applied on a great scale, to be hence spread over the empire, possibly "to the extinction of pauperism." The idea may be a Utopian one, impossible of realisation, but it has been filtered through the minds of many practical men, it would seem, who have one and all pronounced it to be both sound and feasible. As I have said it was first applied to the sale of organs for village churches, after it had been submitted to the minister of public instruction and worship, and had received his sanction. The minister went so far as to appoint a commission to enquire into the scope

and moral bearing of this new system of trade. It was on the report of this commission that in 1863 the minister addressed an official circular to all the prefects of the empire, calling upon them to recommend the acquisition of organs in village churches and public schools on M. Alexandre's plan. From this beginning the present monument has sprung. It is to carry out an experiment on a gigantic scale to the honour of enterprising France in 1867.

Groups of puzzled people collect about the great building at all hours of the day, wondering what the mystery may be. There is a large board fixed upon the scaffolding, bearing these words, "Magasins Réunis!" The united shops! This name suggests merely a bazaar on an unprecedented scale—an inclosed town of shops. A line under the title only deepens the perplexity of the reader. He is told that the united shops are built for the sale of goods, "under a new system, with reimbursement by obligation-warrants." Now, what is an obligation warrant? Who is to be reimbursed? According to M. Timothée Trimm, the building is already called by the facetious workmen of the Quartier St. Antoine the Palace of the Prodigal Son. The ingenious French people who have got a hint at the meaning

of an "obligation warrant," or at the scope of the united-shop plan, have already woven together all kinds of ridiculous and fantastic visions of the future. Of all the facetiæ, however, which have obtained of late about the Chateau d'Eau, the notion of the Palace of the Prodigal Son is by far the happiest. It will be no longer possible for the prodigal son to ruin himself. Let him run up a tailor's bill as long as the Boulevards, let him cover himself with jewels and perfumes, and swathe himself in the finest of linens, and drink deeply of the costliest *crus*, and provide himself with the most expensive stud of horses, and the most luxurious carriages; and yet he shall be as far from ruin, when he has sown the last grain of his wild oats, as he was when, laden with his splendid inheritance, he decamped from under the paternal roof. Henceforth to be ruined by extravagance is to be almost an impossibility; at least, the way to the dogs will be made as difficult in the future as it has been easy in the past. The way to fortune is to become as clear and well beaten as the path to the parish church; while the road to ruin is to be a maze which only the very cunning shall be able to unravel. The sceptical laugh, and shrug their shoulders, and turn on their heels—they have

heard of so many settlements of man's social difficulties in their time. The shades of St. Simon, Fourier, Owen, and the rest, dance before them. This is only a will-o'-the-wisp—a corpse candle—flitting about the graveyard of the dreamers. Yet the minister of public instruction, who is no dweller in Utopia, but rather keeps his foot firmly fixed on *terra firma*, and has a habit of being matter-of-fact in his speculations, has put his seal upon the plan. A commission, that least dreamy of bodies, has approved the calculations which are the basis of the united shops. Has the happy time indeed come at last? In eating our daily bread shall we be grinding corn for our children? The governors of the united shops answer in the affirmative. A commission says yea. The minister of the Emperor vouchsafes an approving nod.

The greatest spendthrift will be the most notable economist. We are, in truth, before the palace in which the regeneration of the Prodigal Son is to be accomplished. Nay, the prodigal shall be richer far than the miser. A spendthrift wife shall be the blessing of her husband's declining years, and shall deserve the lifelong gratitude of her children. Every pound spent on a child from the hour when first it is

swaddled upon its nurse's knees, shall be so much money laid up for it. Well may it crow over its rattle; for the music proclaims only so many shillings stored up for the comfort of its future.

It is in order to realise this happy dream completely, that these united shops have been built on this extraordinary scale, and at a cost of nearly half a million of money. Every industry is to be represented under these massive colonnades. Here every conceivable human want can be satisfied, and the buyer shall be the richer for his purchase. As by the united shop system the child's cradle shall profit the man, so his coffin and his shroud shall not be lost in the earth, but shall return to his successors, after a time, in the shape of so much solid gold. The funeral baked meats may be eaten with the comforting reflection that they will re-appear in the shape of bread to the descendants of the departed.

I have under my eyes a pamphlet by Paul Dalloz on the art of saving by spending. Economy could surely not be presented to the mind in a more agreeable form. M. Dalloz is no dreamer. His pamphlet is merely a reprint from the *Moniteur*. He admits that at the outset the idea of saving by spending is a startling and a dazzling one. He then proceeds to

tell his readers how he has studied the system of "obligation warrants," and has reached the conclusion that their appearance in trade marks a new and happy epoch. We have not come upon the millennium yet, but on the horizon the light of a better day shimmers. To him a happy future is as clear as *bon jour*. He has analysed the foundation of the united shops again and again; he has striven with all his might to find a flaw in the corner-stone of the building; but everywhere are harmony and strength. The united shops are marked with this paradox, "Buy, and you will have your purchase and your purchase-money." The passers by laugh. Many wonder who the fool is behind the black board upon the scaffolding; but still the masons hold on to their work, and the day of opening steadily approaches. A number of practical men have been found to club their money together, that they may say to the public, "While we make a fair profit on our capital, you, who are buying your daily necessaries of us now, shall be only thereby laying up a fortune for those who come after you, or indeed for your own age. Nought that you consume shall be lost to you." "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days," saith Scripture. Without any idea of preach-

ing charity, but with that of appealing to a man's self-love, he is told to cast forth his substance of to-day, where he shall find it, and subject it to his own use again after many days. The golden age is still far away from us; but the age of social economy and statistical science is upon us, and the trade combinations, on which the united shops are founded, are only so many cunningly-contrived sums, which an intelligent and impatient man has set himself and has worked out.

The calculations on which the obligation-warrant system has been established, may be briefly described. The advantage or gain to the purchaser is obtained by the simplification and consequent cheapening of the process of distribution. The wholesale part of the usual profits, which are made in commerce to the disadvantage of the consumer, is suppressed. The 150 shopkeepers who will be installed in the new edifice, will be there at extraordinarily low rents. They will be saved the great cost of separate advertising. At the same time, they will have a steady custom. In short, 150 shopkeepers club their expenses, and find their rent, to begin with, reduced from about £1,000 a year to about £150. The great saving which the shopkeepers will effect in

their expenses, and the advantage of direct trading with the producer, form the basis on which the obligation-warrants are established. The shopkeepers will sell at the usual rate, but the extra profit of their operations, the profit derived from the society's plan, will be kept back and deposited in the society's coffers. Now, it is this profit which is presently returned to the purchaser who has created it. It is expressed to him in this way:—Say that he buys a dress for his wife of the value of 100f.; he pays his money, receives the robe, and with it an obligation-warrant for 100f. This obligation-warrant is a negociable security. It entitles the holder to the sum of 100f. at the expiration of fifty-nine years. But this is not all. A certain amount of these obligation-warrants are paid off every year by lottery, like other public debentures or loan coupons in France. It should be observed, that these obligation-warrants are amply secured, the capital which they represent being all placed out on public securities. Sooner or later then, at latest, fifty-nine years after the purchase is made, the purchaser or his representative comes again into possession of the money he expended.

Say that the obligation-warrant system of trading had been established twenty years ago; under this

system a middle-class family has expended £400 a year. Paterfamilias would have in his *secretaire* obligation-warrants secured on the public funds, to the extent of £8,000, if indeed he had not already realised part of this sum in one of the twenty annual drawings, at each of which he would have had a chance. At any rate, he would have negociable securities, and he would find himself every year the richer for his expenditure. These obligation-warrants are within the reach of the humblest purses. I should observe, that every obligation-warrant will be of the value of 100f. The majority of purchasers in the Magasins-Reunis, or Palace of the Prodigal Son, will not invest to this extent at one visit. A poor mother buys a pair of boots for her boy, paying 6f. She receives with the boots a little printed acknowledgment of her expenditure. When her little purchases in the palace are shown by her receipts to have reached 100f., she repairs to the society's office in the palace, and receives the obligation-warrant to which she is entitled. By this simple process, this economical shopping or trading, the poor mother can, while she is spending money on her boy's necessaries, positively accumulate for him a little fund, that may at his majority be enough to purchase his exoneration

from military service. A dazzling series of cases to which the system of obligation-warrants may bring comfort and happiness, has been drawn up. The *dot* of the daughter is insensibly provided by the expenses of her bringing up. An ingenious writer has described the new system in this way: he says, that the purchaser's money is merely an advance made to the shopkeeper, for which the goods delivered are the interest. It follows, then, as a matter of simple justice, that when the amount of interest expressed by the goods has been earned at the rate of 5 per cent. by the capital, the capital itself should return to the investor.

There are certain articles, as bread, which cannot be included in the operations of the Palace of the Prodigal Son. The profits of the baker are regulated by authority, and there can be no simplifications of his trade that will make a new profit; therefore the consumer cannot get his money back, even after many years. In the Palace of the Prodigal Son there are to be no announcements of extraordinary bargains and ruinous sacrifices. A fair regulated profit will be made on every article. The prices of goods will be exactly those of every fair-dealing shop in Paris, while the purchaser will have the society's

guarantee that every article is exactly what its vendor declares it to be. A great home and foreign retail trade, on the obligation-warrant system, is in process of organisation, so that the prodigal sons of all nations may cease to be the ruin of their families. The builders of the great palace by the Chateau d'Eau liken their system to the operations of some of the co-operative societies of England, and with reason. These obligation-warrants closely resemble the tickets which members of co-operative stores receive on making a purchase—tickets which entitle them to a share in the trading profits of the society pro-portioned to the amount of their purchase. Wherever there is a simplification of trade there is naturally a gain to the consumer, since every profit made by the middle-men or wholesale and retail traders or distributors, comes out of his pocket. Hence it is that the poorest purchaser pays the highest price. Co-operative societies had their origin among the working classes, for the good reason that these classes were the greatest sufferers by the expensive complications of trade. The obligation-warrant system is only a new development of the principle of association, and it will be an exceedingly curious and instructive one, worthy the serious attention of all

visitors to the Universal Exhibition of 1867. We have little co-operative stores in our London byeways. Our neighbours, however, have stolen a march upon us, and have erected a gorgeous palace in order to apply the principle of co-operation to the wants and tastes of all classes.

MILITARY LIFE.

We meet M. About on better ground in his new volume than he occupied in his more elaborate and important romance of "Madelon." In "Madelon" his powers were misused. The sculptor's hand was full of cunning. Every line and curve, and every delicacy of light and shade, were rendered with exceeding grace; but the subject was in itself repulsive. We were glad to part company with "Madelon," and were sorry that a fine artist had taken so much trouble to make us acquainted with her. Now, the Turco is a figure as attractive as Madelon was repulsive. Leopold's sad story of all that is noble and bright in youth, blighted, in the cold shade of his mother's aristocracy, and misunderstood by his father in the midst of his brilliant dissipation, is one that provokes good emotions in the reader. The pictures of society through which Leopold's frail and sickly figure moves, are touched with an artist's practised

pencil. The military scenes are as true to life as Meissonnier's figures, and as fresh. Where the story opens in the Café d'Orsay, among a number of rollicking officers, the reader is at once made acquainted with Captain Brunner—a dashing Alsatian soldier, as courageous as a lion, and as tender to his little friend Leopold de Gardelux—well, as tender as the Countess de Gardelux should have been to so sickly, and high-spirited, and accomplished a boy. Brunner's unaffected talk about Maman Brunner and his *bourgeois* home, with all its heartiness, is in excellent contrast with the indifference for her own flesh and blood, and the all-consuming pride of the Countess de Gardelux. There is no plot in *le Turco*. But there are excellent little turns and bits of family history. There are perfect scenes, as the march out of the little column from Biskra at midnight, in which Leopold receives his baptism of powder:—The grief of the good Brunner over the grave where his poor Turco lies wrapped in coarse sacking; and, again, the interview of Brunner with the Countess de Gardelux and her daughter, who shook the bluff and gallant soldier with their polite and high-bred indifference, when his voice, muffled and trembling with emotion, he gives to

them the relics left them in his care by his dead comrade.

M. About contrives to give the pulse and warm blood of life to his lightest stories. His incidents and accidents are always artistically chosen and used. It seems to be by the merest chance in the world, by an unguarded exclamation from Brunner over his *absinthe,* at his little military *circle,* that the story is told at all. The pitiless manner in which Hèlène de Gardelux (who loves her brother Leopold tenderly when she leaves him on his fatal journey to Algeria) is developed from the warm and generous girl into the image of her mother, while it saddens the reader, impresses him with the reality of the scene. There are, indeed, some high touches of art in the bye-play of this simple, sad story of a high-spirited boy who was killed in his first campaign. The slight sketch of Leopold's tutor, Pelgas, (the Countess cannot correctly remember his name) is charming. "There are fine gallant fellows," says M. About, "among those who devote themselves to the formation of young heads; and I am far from certain that the *bourgeois* can cry quits with them when he has paid them their 'ten louis' a month." Here is a clear

glimpse at two phases of French society, given in the course of the Turco's story with admirable effect. The speaker is the brave Captain Brunner:—"Even in friendship there are barriers which are difficult to put aside. They say, for instance, that at school all are equals. Well, when I was studying at the College of Schlestadt, I was very intimate with the son of the sub-prefect. We were like brothers; we shared each other's jam and marbles: what was mine was his, and *vice versâ*. Yet when we went out for the Sunday, he going to the sub-prefecture, and I to my uncle Felsath's, the baker, if we chanced to meet in the street, he scarcely recognised me, but gave me a little wave of the hand from afar, as if he were ashamed of me. If his father had asked him who I was, he would probably have answered, 'Oh, nobody! only one of the boys at college!' So that you see we had everything in common but our connections. And why? Because a sub-prefect, in our part of the world, is almost a noble, while papa Brunner was only a simple vine-grower. It is true that our property brought us in some thirteen or fourteen hundreds a year, and that the other with a large family had only his place to depend on;—

but no matter, it would have been thought very derogatory to have offered me a plateful of soup in the house of the sub-prefect."

"It is much the same tune in the army, although equality is at the base of all our laws; we may sleep under the same tent, drink out of the same glass, we may risk our lives one for the other, we may esteem each other, love each other, "*tutoyer*" each other, we may be comrades, but I shall never know either the mother, sister, or wife of my comrade if the aristocratic particule "*de*," happens unfortunately to come between us. Revolution has set many matters right, but it has not touched this *bêtise*. I have known twenty young scions of noble houses, known them intimately; I even saved one who had exposed himself to the most terrible of risks. I am sure that the young fellow would allow himself to be killed, sooner than hear a word said against me; when we meet he embraces me, drags me to the café, will insist upon my dining with him at all sorts of gilded restaurants, but he has never presented me to his wife, and I do not even know his home address! Am I not saying the truth? You will understand then why young Gardelux became as dear to me in three months as if I had

known him ten years. And he was only just in his behaviour to me, for after all I looked over, in his case, the inequality of our grades, and 'grade' is an affair in which the merit is not alone in name. But I was grateful to him for having common sense, were it only for the variety of the thing."

Brunner sees no romance in a night march, even in Africa.

"It is neither gay nor picturesque. The column spreads itself along like a dark ribbon on a black ground. The gay colours of the uniforms are faded; the joyous tumult of war has given place to a silence only broken by the steps of the men; and the steady vibration of guns, a stone dislodged, a foot that stumbles, a smothered oath—these are the incidents of the route. We resemble a procession of monks rather than heroes on the march. And if the thought of death should present itself, it is certain to do so from a monk's point of view. I have read somewhere that if battles were fought at midnight, bravery would be more rare. There is some truth in this, not that courage has its source in vanity, but that a man is not himself who is not in full possession of all his senses. It is not alone in the *morale* that success lies. To go gallantly into dan-

ger several things are wanted. It is in the full vigour of his life that a man is best disposed to sacrifice it; and it is in broad daylight that we prefer to face cannons, bayonets, and all the other amiable instruments of destruction. It was eleven o'clock at night: the moon had gone to bed with the chickens, and the stars only served to underline the blackness of the night. The ideas of the Purco were a little infectious. I could not help indulging in certain melancholy reflections that were rather unusual to me. Every step brought us nearer to mountains which were bristling with bullet-loaded guns. Was it likely our troops would return safe and sound? And for whom then the bad numbers in the lottery? For Leopold? For me? For both of us? They are happy rogues who have faith, and imagine that a prayer can turn aside a cannon-ball from its straight course! Our school life takes away from us a little of this kind of consolation. I am not, however, going to tell you that I was *afraid*: this was my ninth campaign. Still, somehow or other, I could not help thinking of a thousand things old and dear to me, which I could not be perfectly sure of seeing again on earth. I imagined to myself Mamma Brunner with her silver spectacles, her

knitting in her hand, and her elbow on the window-ledge; and the old house painted red, with the date, 1640, written on the archway; and the inn of the Three Kings, opposite; and the church; and the large room of the Town Hall; and the well of the sixteenth century; and the chemist in the market-place, with his pretty daughters and his wonderful carved cases. I thought of our vines, and the grape harvest of '58, the last at which I was present with Gretchen, otherwise Marguerite Moser, my cousin, who was at that time a regular tomboy. In short, my devil of a memory brought back so much, and did it so well, that I felt growing stupid, and my heart was heavy as lead. I would have given five francs to hear the first gunshot of the Arab sentinels, because then one knows what one is about, and has no time to be worrying oneself about trifles."

THE TRADES OF PARIS.

1865.

PIERRE VINÇARD, who has undertaken to write a description and statistical history of the working classes of Paris, under the auspices of a commission composed of known workmen and friends of workmen, has himself wielded the hammer and driven the file. He comes from a good stock of intelligent toilers, who could reflect as well as work. His uncle sang songs of labour, that found a wide and cordial acceptance among his own class. The Vinçards, indeed, appear to have been admirable representation men; of whom the author of the book before us is the best known, and most practised and accomplished with his pen. He has now been known in Paris for many years as a terse, sensible and enthusiastic writer on the sufferings and aspirations of the class to which he and his family belong. His reputation drew a long list of subscribers about him, when he undertook to describe the workmen of Paris, taking the workshop in which

he was born and bred for his point of view. He had become known to French literary men of all degrees, for the intrepidity with which he wrote of the workman's sufferings, which he had shared, and for the perseverance with which he sought to build up a system that should make poverty cease from out the land. Emile de Girardin opened the columns of *La Presse* to the workman who was fighting gallantly the battle of his class. He contributed a series of graphic papers on the industrious classes to a journal now forgotten, the *Bien Etre Universel.* Vinçard the elder founded the *Ruche Populaire,* in 1839. In this organ of the workers—of the bees in the great Paris hive,—Pierre Vinçard found a channel exactly adapted to the propagation of his ideas. Twenty-seven years in brief, have passed over the head of a brave and intelligent representation of the Paris workman, while he has been fighting for the good of his order. He has deserved the great trust which has been confided to him by a number of fellow-citizens, among whom we find Arlès, Dufour, Bouchandat, Maxime Du Camp, Ernest Desmarest, Emile de Girardin, the publisher Hetzel, Michelet, Payen, of the Institute, and Perdonnet, President of the Polytechnic Association. These gentlemen explain, in a modest address

to subscribers, prefixed to the first volume of M. Vinçard's labours, why they have asked one who has lived and wrought in a workshop, to be the workman's historian. They cannot believe, judging from the failure of the many attempts which have been made by scholarly writers, that the most accomplished literary man, who has lived all his life in easy circumstances, and removed from the working people, would ever succeed in painting the workman in colours absolutely true. He must miss much detail that is necessary to a complete work of art. He cannot be intimate with all the secrets of the workshop. Nay, it is by no means clear that he would ever succeed in winning the workman's confidence.

The workman who has literary skill, starts with enormous advantages over the outside observer—when the race is for position, as the most successful historian of labour. He has that ready to his hand which the outsider must seek with toil and fret, and which he will never get wholly within his grip. So some of the leading social doctors of Paris have clubbed together to start the literary workman fairly on his journey through the great work-a-day world of Paris.

The first volume only of M. Vinçard's studies has

yet appeared, and by its merits we may judge whether the author's band of supporters are likely to reap the full harvest of useful knowledge to which they have confidently looked forward. M. Vinçard opens his labours with an explanatory preface, in which he shows that his countrymen, whether dramatists or romancists, have set up a gallery of conventional types of working men that is completely untrue to nature. While workers have, on the one hand, been described as "inferiors," mere brutes who were, as Carlyle defines man, "tool-using animals," and only that they have, on the other hand, been paraded as exemplars of every virtue and all descriptions of heroism. This is true, to some extent, of English imaginative writers; but it is only a mild statement of the errors of omission and commission perpetrated on the French stage and in French fiction.

The sentimental school have made the day-labourer a pure ideal being—"speaking," as M. Vinçard says, "in refined language, ideas still more refined or pretentious than the language, and philosophizing, on occasions, like disciples of Plato or Aristotle." The true worker is not to be found in the clouds; he must be sought at his bench or in his attic, but never, according to our author, in books. Nor will flying

visits do to complete a limner of the labouring man. M. Vinçard says that to know them you must live their life, bear suffering and joy in common with them—in fine, wear the blouse with them. "Weightier reasons," M. Vinçard writes, "have made me undertake these studies. The upper classes are ignorant, as a rule, of the sufferings of the industrious classes; which ignorance is easily explained by their education, their habits, their entire life. Their fault is not a want of sensibility nor a lack of justice—it is ignorance." These moderate interpretations of the indifference of the rich are the key-notes of M. Vinçard's argument. According to him, neither virtue nor vice is engendered by wealth or poverty. A man is as good as his neighbour, although the one be a jobbing tailor and the other a Duke of Morny. Not only, however, according to M. Vinçard, do the rich sin towards the poor through ignorance of them; a skilled and well-paid workman lives and dies without knowing how the day-labourer—the *homme de peine*—shifts his miserable body through the world. In the same way, a fashionable milliner will not believe that there are women in Paris who ply the needle all day to earn a few sous. M. Vinçard hopes to dissipate a little of this ignorance that separates

class from class, and by diffusing a true knowledge of his own class to elevate it in the world's esteem and deliver it from many oppressions.

The method which the author has devised for the accomplishment of his praiseworthy and useful object, is essentially French: the manner in which the method is carried out is also purely French. The first volume, which treats of Paris workmen who are occupied in the preparation of aliments for their fellow-citizens, is divided into a series of separate and distinct studies. The butcher stands apart from the baker, and the baker from the pastrycook. Each figure is introduced with an historical flourish; and is occasionally served up with piquant anecdote. The histories of the ancient trade corporations, with their foolish old laws, and grotesque customs and processions, are amusing. These may suggest many bright bits to the historian who desires to paint the people as they worked, and fought, and fenced themselves about in the olden time. The author has made use of De la Mare's "Traité de la Police," of Dulaure and Boland, of E. Levasseur's "History of the Working Classes"—Husson's "Food of Paris," and of many old books on Paris trades. His list of authorities is long and various. Now he gathers a

fact from an obscure pamphlet, and now he levies contributions on the pages of the Red Book of the Châtelet. This massing of material from distant quarters is skilfully carried out, and an historical figure of a journeyman baker or a journeyman butcher is built up, which does credit to the builder. The history, for instance, of the part once taken by the proud and burly butchers, in high pageants, royal processions and political demonstrations, is vividly and completely told. The three jolly actor-bakers whose popularity gave umbrage to the regular actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, at the opening of the seventeenth century, make a good contrast to the mournful fraternity of bread-makers, who now pass their brief and miserable lives in foul cellars, at the oven's scorching mouth. The chapter on Paris pastrycooks past and present is most amusing reading. It is a complete history of the cake and the tart of the Parisians, from the origin of the *gaufre* and the *oublie*, to the craftily-flavoured *savarin* of to-day. The pork-butchers are taken in hand from the time when the good Parisians' pigs ran freely about the streets of the city, to the great inconvenience and danger of travellers. It was one of these citizen-pigs that got between the legs of Philippe's horse, and

caused the fall and death of the rider—Louis-le-Gros' eldest son.

We are referred back to the corporation statutes of the *Vinaigrier-moutardiers,* and are reminded that time was when they were styled *Vinaigriers-sauciers-moutardiers.* But they had more titles than these when they were incorporated at the close of the fifteenth century. They were *Vinaigriers-moutardiers-sauciers-distillateurs en eau-de-vie et esprit de vin, et buffetiers!*

The origin and development of the art of preserving food by desiccation, &c., are discussed at length; the discussion preceding an account of the workmen who are now employed in the preserving trades. M. Vinçard traces the art of preserving vegetables by desiccation to the pastor Eisen and to Appert. Eisen flourished towards the end of the last century. He built ovens to dry his vegetables, and published the results of his experiments, pointing out the value his dried vegetables would have in a ship or a beleaguered city. The cooks, the distillers, the brewers, the sugar-refiners, the chocolate-makers, and the confectioners follow. We have the wages earned in each trade, the trade customs and habits, added to the historical portrait. A more amusing

series than that M. Vinçard has wrought for his countrymen, it is hardly possible to conceive. But the work is not one that can be of much use to the classes with whom it deals. It does not define broadly the wants and aspirations of Paris workmen. It is without plan, and lacks direct purpose. The writer, whose earnestness and talent we respect, tells us in his Preface that he has limited himself to the statement of facts. He should have disposed them, as a general disposes his men, to do battle against an enemy: he should have welded them into some general truth.

> Roots, wood, bark, and leaves, singly perfect may be,
> But, clap hodge-podge together, they don't make a tree.

However, M. Vinçard promises that in his final volume he will describe at length the secret associations, the mutual benefit societies, the free classes, &c., of his fellow-workmen of Paris.

THE PARISIANS OF PARIS.

We are to understand that the superlatively beautiful, sumptuous, elegant, and *spirituelle* woman is a Parisian. Other cities may show lovely types of womanhood; but the perfect woman grows only by the banks of the Seine. The model Parisian is an honest woman. She has twelve hundred a year; is dressed by a *brave couturière*. She knows music thoroughly, yet never touches the piano. She is acquainted with history and the poets, and never writes. Her hair is exquisitely brushed, and her teeth are white and clean. She wears fine, closely-fitting stockings, gloves, and boots. She has a dainty hand, that can artistically group flowers and fruit for the table. She can give the tone to a conversation, and shine in it; and she alone, among all the women in the world, can do these things, and have these attributes in perfection. A pleasant picture of woman, perfected according to French taste by art! Many will prefer Lucy by the

untrodden ways, or something more of warm Nature and less of Art, as in an English lady; or native grace that grows among the buttercups by the rural vicarage, or under the yeoman's roof. Yet the *Parisienne*, to whom Art is Nature, whose tongue is as light and agile as her hand, who "is mistress of herself though China fall," and is mistress in her circle by her unaffected grace, her wit, and her amiable habit of seeking to please all who approach her; this exquisite creature, made to refine and gladden the holidays of life, has claims upon our respect as well as Lucy. If you want an affection that will wear well, and grow under trials, and be triumphant at the close of life, take Lucy. Are you a diplomatist, and would you charm the elect of society, take unto wife Mdlle. de Lys, of the gloomy Faubourg, and it shall be well with you.

Introducing a gallery of the *Parisiennes* of Paris, M. Théodore de Banville leads his readers to expect a series of portraits of exquisite delicacy and finish. I had a vision of noble *dames* and *demoiselles*,—some lighly suffused with the rosy tints of sentiment, of love; others sweetly pensive, with tender eyes, lighted to the very brink of laughter. I hoped to see M. de Banville lifting to his canvas the elegant beauties of

Paris *salons* as daintily as the Indian lifts the sweet scent of the roses from the bosom of a stream with the leaf of a lily. But whom have we here? Who are these Parisians of Paris? Surely Paris has heard, has read enough about *ces dames!* They affront honest women enough in public places. They stare Modesty out of countenance, and with their gaudy finery and sparkling jewels make the homely kirtle look homelier. Much ink has been spilt over their sorry histories, that had better have remained in the ink-bottle. The library of the Literature of Shame surely fills shelves enough. There is the wherewithal at hand to deaden the heart and degrade the manners of all the rising generation. M. de Banville is a writer whose dramatic force, whose fruitful fancy and whose literary skill would be invaluable in his time and country if he would exercise them on the side of decency and virtue. I find in the gallery of portraits of Parisian women before me abundant evidence of poetic fancy, of strong sympathies, and of the rare power of extracting the redeeming bit of sweetness and goodness that lies, we would all of us fain believe, in the most depraved and brutalized natures. In the "Life and Death of Minette," M. de Banville shows his powers at their best. The

picture he draws of the clown and the rope-dancer is a revolting one, over which the reader cries again and again, "Enough! enough!" But he reads on; for the drunken clown reels palpably before him, and Adolphina, under her shaggy hair, glares at him. What a couple! Each has the ferocious instincts of a wild beast—the animal love and the passionate hate.

The gallery opens with a startling figure, that of Élodie, who has taken up the ideal as her speciality. She plays the game of innocence, and therefore is a little more disgusting than her companions. The second figure, the "bonne des grandes occasions," at once suggests to us the kind of company M. de Banville has provided for our amusement. How were we not deceived by the terms of the invitation in his Preface? His introductory description of the manner in which the brown bread of innocence is dropped for the white bread of shame, is told in vivid, dramatic touches. Émérance, the *ingénue*, is humorously described; but she is not reputable company. The Parisians, according to M. de Banville, live for love and luxury. Hence it is the paradise of women who love dress. Henriette, who was of no age, abandoned her lover when he ventured to ask

her the year of her birth. Valentine of the Marble Heart is a figure that no English writer or publisher would venture to put forth; and he would be very adventurous who should submit to the English reader Berthe, the lady of the dressing-gowns.

Emmeline, the woman thirteen years old, is a pitiful little creature. She was the pet child at the Opera, and was covered with kisses by Mesdames Cerito and Alboni. The picture of the little innocent at the Opera is delightful, and comes like a bit of sunshine in M. de Banville's gallery of shady characters. But a turn of the leaf parts us from the innocent, to show us the "woman of thirteen years of age,"—a repulsive little monster of audacious vice. Her innocence behind the scenes at the Opera is her best acting in the theatre. But Emmeline is not quite so repulsive as Claire, the virtuous girl. Claire's abode, in the Faubourg St. Germain, and her severe bringing up, are sketched excellently well. So strictly was she guarded, that in her ancestral park, the flowers she trod on would on no account have been permitted to rise and turn to look at her. She appears, to take up the younger Dumas's illustration, a speckless peach, of the thirty-sous basket at the very least. At length have we lit upon a sweet bit

of honest womanhood. The pleasure lasts but for a moment. The speckless peach is cast among the most damaged of fruit. Claire's father is ruined, and he flies to Australia to repair his fortune. During his absence, Claire and her mother become acquainted with misery. An infamous old man enters the house to make a bargain, and Claire goes out one day and returns with a "portemonnaie swollen with bank notes." The bargain has been accepted. Was it worth while bearing us off into the respectable solitudes of the Faubourg St. Germain for this? If behind the grey walls of these quiet streets good women are not to be found, where in the giddy capital of the Second Empire shall we look for them?

Perhaps the most skilful bit of painting is Lucie Chardin. Her account of the actress at home, married to the poor working journalist, is a true bit of nature. It is the story of two hard-worked people, two types of Paris life, free from intrigue or shameful episode. The old rope-dancer, Hebe Caristi, is exceedingly interesting, and at its close exceedingly horrible. The re-appearance of the old rope-dancer is pitilessly real. Towards the end of M. de Banville's gallery, he invites his readers to the "Festival

of the Titans," at which Lord Angel Sidney, a Sir Charles Coldstream, with much more money than wit, plays the part of host. Tired of play and courtesans, and indeed of every pleasure he has tasted, Lord Angel commands his confidential servant to prepare the noblest feast Chevet can provide, to be served upon the sculptured gold of Barye. To this feast are bidden seven guests, each of whom is to be a professor of some trade or calling of which his lordship had never heard. You see that M. de Banville, having an absurd story to tell, does us the honour of making an Englishman its hero. The guests assemble, and include two women of whose character the less said the better. After dinner, his lordship intimates to his guests that he is about to give £400 a year to the person present whose means of gaining his or her livelihood shall be decided to be the most extraordinary or the most eccentric. Toby, for this is the name of Lord Angel's man servant, places upon the table *rentes* representing £400 a year, and 200 notes of 1,000f. each, so that the winner may take his entire prize in cash, or receive it in the more prudent form of *rentes*. Then each guest describes his trade: one is a varnisher of turkeys' legs; —but let us pass over the list of eccentrics. To come

to the point, the prize is unanimously given to a young man, who says in a soft voice at the last moment, "I am a lyric poet, and I live by my profession." I might pick out twenty happy bits of portraiture, or felicitous observation, from M. de Banville's gallery of the Parisians of Paris; but I will refrain for the present, in the hope that this vivacious, humorous, and dramatic writer will some day lead us into another gallery; among the gracious, witty, fascinating, and virtuous gentlewomen who make the charm, and are still the ornament and rulers, of good society in Paris.

THROUGH NORMANDY AND BRITTANY.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE sketches of agriculture in Normandy and Brittany, the notes on Norman and Breton fisheries, and the passing descriptions of the way in which Norman and Breton agriculturists live, are a collection of rapid observations, taken day by day. I have not attempted a complete study of the past history and actual condition of the serial crops, nor of Norman and Breton cattle, poultry and dairy-farming. I travelled in the autumn of 1865 in Normandy and Brittany, taking notes by the way, for a series of rapid sketches as the Morning Post Commissioner, under the title of "The Food Markets of Normandy." The object of those articles was to draw public attention to Normandy and Brittany as two great undeveloped food markets lying within easy reach of England. I

found the more enlightened Norman traders fully alive to the benefits they would derive from a vigorous development of the natural resources of the two great northern provinces of France. Their ports lie opposite our coast. It is through these ports that a great food-commerce will spring up, when the French railway authorities shall have been forced to adopt a through system for the rapid conveyance of perishable articles, and when Norman and Breton farmers shall have been enabled, by an influx of capital, to avail themselves of all the benefits of modern agricultural science. Messrs. John Arthur & Co., of the Rue Castiglione, Paris, have established a "world-express." They will despatch you a parcel or a shipload by the fleetest *route*, to any part of the civilized world. When a great firm can undertake an agency on this scale, and is able to see clearly and wisely the direction in which the world is spinning, the inquirer is surprised to find that great railway lines are still directed by men who put every obstacle in the way of the development of their goods-traffic; and instead of being the ardent promoters of international trade, make themselves stumbling-blocks in its way. These directors have yet to learn that low rates for the carriage of merchandise are, in the end, the more

remunerative rates. There are English railway directors as blind as their French *confrères*. Liverpool cotton is carried to Rouen by way of Grimsby and Dieppe!

At the present time, the importance of ascertaining the kind and extent of cattle and other food-trade, England may derive from the fertile provinces of Normandy and Brittany, cannot be doubted. I pretend only to skim the surface of the subject. I do not for one moment affect to be a teacher. I hope only to attract the attention of practical authorities to the ground I have travelled over. They will find the ground worth careful cultivation. Those readers who may desire to acquire an intimate knowledge of French agriculture and cattle-breeding may consult with advantage:—

Maurice Block's "Statistique de la France;" also a book he published in 1851, entitled "Des Charges de l'Agriculture, dans les divers pays de l'Europe."

"L'Agriculture et les Classes Agricoles de la Bretagne," by A. du Chatellier.

"Statistique de l'Agriculture de la France comprenant la Statistique des cereales, de la vigne, des cultures diverses, des pâturages, des bois et fôrets, et des animaux domestiques, avec leur production

actuelle, comparée a celle des temps anciens, et des principaux pays de l'Europe."

"Histoire des Classes Rurales en France et de leurs progrès dans l'Égalité civile et la propriété," par Henry Doniol. Second edition.

"L'Agriculture et la Population," par M. L. de Lavergne Membre de l'Institut, et de la Société Centrale de l'Agriculture.

"Des Systémes de Culture en France et de leur influence sur l'économie Sociale," par M. H. Passy, Membre de l'Institut.

"Précis du Droit Commercial," by P. Pradier-Fodéré, avocat à la Cour Imperiale de Paris.

For special studies of departments, or sections of French agriculture, as it is offered to French farmers, the reader may consult the list of the Bibliothèque des Cultivateurs. He will find copious agricultural statistics in the latest edition of M. Block's Statistique de la France, and the latest statistics in the writer's "Annuaire de l'Economie Politique" for each year.

CHAPTER I.

THE PLENTY OF NORMANDY.

DIEPPE.

IF the influence of railways and steam-boats has not been so marked in fat and fertile Normandy as it has been in Devonshire, it is simply because the commercial power of steam has not been so fully developed in France as it has been in England. The days are long since past when people thought of at once economising and fattening on the cheap cream and poultry and fruits of Devonshire. The smallest farmers, the proprietors of the most modest hencoop, the owners of a single cow, reckon up every egg, every thimbleful of milk, every spoonful of cream, with their eye on the voracious markets which supply the aristocracy of Torquay or Ilfracombe. Keen-witted dealers travel through every village, over moor and meadow, and sweep the plenty from the face of the land. The great towns have thrown out feelers

into the smallest villages. Go where you will, you still find the counterpart of the Devonshire "regrater," who is loth to leave milk or eggs enough behind him, even for the parson's children. The highways to London and to other great centres of population are so many and so well organised for rapid and regular communication, that that which was growing at sundown hundreds of miles away can be on the morrow's breakfast-table in London. Go where you will, the complaint of country or sea-faring folk is that London, or Liverpool, or Manchester, or Glasgow, or Birmingham absorbs all the native or local produce, and leaves only dear refuse behind.

Gossiping a week or two since with an old and experienced proprietor of one of the Broadstairs luggers, the conversation fell on the dearness of all kinds of food, at the present time. He was a hardy, a noble specimen of the British sailor, who had lain many a stormy night in his lugger off the Goodwin, and had steered many a homeward-bound vessel safe into the river. He had been fortunate, and had had his share of not a few valuable wrecks. Originally he was a fisherman, and a dealer in fish—in herrings chiefly. But he gave that trade up, he said, for now nothing was to be made out of it. He used to run

out in his boat and meet the laden smacks, and buy his lasts of fish on the open seas. There was some room for speculation then. Ten years ago he bought for ten pounds, the quantity of herrings which now sold for fifty. Then they were to be had three for a penny, now they cost twopence each. In the old time the workpeople laid down a butter firkin of herrings for the winter, and now he could not possibly imagine how the poor folk about Broadstairs contrived to live. They could not lay in a store at that price. He should still lay down his kilderkin, but then he could manage it. The railway, the sailor knew, had made this dearness. He supposed it was all the better for the Londoners; but still, he repeated, he could not imagine how the poor people about him managed to get through the winter months. He was no economist, this hardy old salt, who had earned for himself a little competence out of the Goodwin Sands. It did not occur to him to inquire whether the increased price paid for fish, under the steam-boat and railway systems, had raised the wages of his neighbours. It is, however, a strange phase of the times in which we live, that the country is becoming dear while the town is becoming cheap, especially in England—that is, prices are the same in the country as

in town, or nearly so, while the countryman has not the townsman's choice of food. The townsman has the benefit of all turns of the food markets, whereas the countryman's purchases of food are restricted to three or four articles of consumption, which vary regularly in price, according to the plentifulness or scarcity of the last season. The complaint made to me by the Broadstairs sailor, is echoed in every French fishing port in the Channel. Here, at Boulogne, and at Calais, and at the smaller fishing ports, you must, as a rule, pay Paris or London prices for fish! As the English farm-servant helps to send off on railway-trucks the milk produce of the farm on which he is engaged, so the Dieppe fisherman hauls ashore, and packs into those long ramshackled fish carts, the produce of the night's fishing, little or none of which he can afford to taste. Encompassed by white seas of milk, the agricultural labourer can often get none for his children; and the fisherman, let him make a miraculous draught, shall carry home only two or three little fish, daintily suspended by their gills, upon his brawny fingers. The fisherman's case is by no means so hard as that of the agricultural labourer; since the high prices obtained for fish must enable the fisherman (who has generally a direct in-

terest in the profits of the craft he helps to navigate) to buy all kinds of food, whereas the poor bumpkin has no means of providing his family with a complete substitute—if indeed there were a complete substitute—for the milk which they see constantly before their eyes, but are scarcely ever destined to taste. Unquestionably the great hardship of the agricultural labourer—indeed the great hardship of the hard-working poor generally—is that the choice of food is restricted to three or four articles. The agricultural labourer lives upon the same food, whether it be cheap or dear. When it is dear, he and his suffer; when there is a sudden and great plenty of it, it is wasted. I need not go far for an example. In Dieppe, in 1865, herrings were so plentiful in the fresh herring season, when they are caught off the coast, that, as my informant expressed it, nobody would touch them. They were down to two francs the *pièce*, whereas the average price is 20f. They were spread all through the surrounding villages. They penetrated far, but still they came in shoals—in glittering boat loads! Now, here was a sudden abundance of excellent food, at a tenth its average value. It could be preserved for a time of scarcity; only regular, rapid, and cheap transit was necessary to carry it at once, at a profit, to

fisherman and carrier, into distant parts, where it would be a great boon to the poor consumer, who rarely has a change of diet. The simple people of Dieppe, however, who, a few years ago—long since the Duchesse de Berri gave a certain *ton* to Dieppe—were engaged in the honest and profitable business of salting or curing herrings, now despise the old trade. Dieppe has become fashionable, and the rooms in which the herrings were cured, I am told, now give shelter, in the summer months, to the *élite* of Parisian society. It is more profitable and less troublesome to lodge Madame la Baronne for two months, than it is to keep stores of cured fish, and trade in them.

"You see," said a Dieppois to me, "the townsfolk gain as much as they did before, and they have plenty of time, *pour se promener*." Indeed, the tide of life flows smoothly enough hereabouts, for all classes. I see the fishermen's wives waddling home along the port on market days, with their deep baskets filled with the splendid vegetables grown in the Norman valleys. It is clear that they can command these goodly bundles of leeks and carrots of prodigious size, and turnips in plenty. That wondrously-picturesque market-place, is bright and sunny proof of the ease of human life. It is a picture of plenty. The mounds

of vegetables, the baskets of fruit, and butter, and eggs; the fat ducks, turkeys, and fowls, waiting in rows to be bought and killed (for here the bird comes in the quick to market); the tilted cart-loads of potatoes against the old church; the ripe yellow pumpkins, big as cart wheels; the gaping mouths of sacks bursting with their cram of red onions; the stacks of enormous *pains de ménage* at something under three half-pence a pound; the rich array of fruits and cheeses, make up a scene, enlivened by the crowds of Norman peasants and gaudily-dressed fisherwomen, and dotted with the scarlet umbrellas that cover the stalls; that give a strange mock dignity to the heroic bronze of the brave Duquesne who stands in the middle of the market-place, and is the centre of the flower stalls. It may be remarked, the consumer is put in direct relation with the producer. At dawn of market-day, files of long, low hooded carts rumble along the valleys, and skirt the hills of the fat grazing lands and gardens that lie about the old city of Charlemagne. In each cart is the marketable store of a little farm, or garden, or paddock. A dozen head of poultry, a basket of lumps of butter cool in cabbage leaves, some cheese perhaps, with a sack or two of garden produce, are the load. People who are well-to-do, and have plenty

of crowns at their command, come and stand in this market-place, and themselves sell to the town housewife the flesh, and fowl, and vegetable they rear with their own hands on their little *terre*. I saw lately a stately country matron of the better class, standing, with the dignity of Lady Macbeth, her hands crossed, and in each hand a live pigeon, held by its wings! In this way only did she let her customers know that she had poultry and birds to sell. She did not deign to supplicate custom. Her daughter, elegantly dressed, and with a pretty morocco travelling-bag at her side (whose external appearance was that of a visitor living on the *plage*), stood by the mother's elbow, and took money and gave change. I never saw the ceremony of vending poultry in an open market, conducted by a tragedy queen before. The richly-attired young lady did not do her part of the business with the air of one who was demeaning herself. She was quite at home in the market-place. There are primitive people still, in these Norman valleys. In the market the people who buy and sell are mostly of equal degree. The market is chiefly made up of small vendors and poor buyers. The producer has only his own profit to make, so he can sell at a low price. A prime fat goose is to be bought

for 3s.; a pair of plump ducks are worth half-a-crown. I stood by while a housewife bought vegetables for a *pot-au-feu.* She had a handful of fine leeks with some noble carrots and turnips, and for all she paid two sous. I could not help picturing to myself how with a few more pence this thrifty woman would season and provide a rich and wholesome family dish; and, by her knowledge and prudence, make plenty in her home, where, with her means, many an English housewife could barely keep the wolf from the door. In this market-place, I see a thrifty and a sober race. The farmers who come to town, do not repair to a market dinner and a booze afterwards. The place is not surrounded with low public-houses, disgorging, late in the day, half inebriated market folk. There are little *cafés* and hotels round about, where the men may regale themselves with a little cider or weak beer. But there is waste nowhere, and there is saving on all sides. It may be that land is as dear, that bricks and mortar are as dear, that clothing is as dear here as in an English show country town. I believe that all these necessaries are, as a rule, as dear in France as they are in England; nay, visitors who enter Dieppe shops; who endeavour to buy provisions in the Grande Rue, or who make a picnic to the Vallée of

Arques, or to the desolate fishing port of Pourville, will find that Dieppe is just a shade dearer than Paris. The Dieppois coolly impress this upon their visitors. Complain of the price they ask, and they remind you that Dieppe is not Paris, bidding you understand that you should expect to pay more here than you do in the capital. A Dieppe grocer asks two francs and a half, or two shillings, for an eightpenny pot of marmalade. It is his price, he will tell you, with a shrug of the shoulders. He knows that under no circumstances would he pay such an extravagant sum, for nothing could ever make the *bourgeois* extravagant.

He knows, moreover, that no townsfolk of his would give him two shillings for his marmalade. The visitors are the enemy, and pillage is the cry.

At the mouth of the Scie, between a break in the rugged rocks of this ever crumbling Norman coast, lies a ruined little fishing village, the inhabitants of which have not had spirit enough to keep a roof over the parish church. Some twenty miserable little huts are clustered round the tumbled walls of a roofless church, choked with briars and nettles. On the walls of one of these huts the words "Café des Etrangers" are painted. The peasants who live in this little hut, with its clay floor; and serve

execrable beer and the roughest blue *ordinaire* to the tourists from Dieppe, are masters in the art of charging. Their brown bread is only twice as dear as that of the best Paris restaurant, and these primitive folk, for their 60-centime wine, ask 35 sous! People soon learn, even in a desolate and abandoned place like this, what town prices are. The air with which the fisherman's wife answered, in her broad *patois*, "Five francs," when I asked her what was to be paid for the brown bread and butter and the wine, was a good study. But that woman will not waste one centime of the five francs; she will not buy a bad imitation of a Paris bonnet, and lengthen out her short skirts, and give herself the airs and graces of a town dame; she will still save and save, and hold her place like the stately lady with the pigeons, in the market. Her daughter, who is clattering about the mud floor in her *sabots*, and her gawky boy, who is staring vacantly over the hedge with a black pipe in his mouth, will find their full account out of all this cheating of the stranger. They live, for the present, on soup and bread and vegetables, with occasional treats of pork; but they get variety and nutriment out of their humble kitchen which the British agricultu-

rist cannot extract from his. Life is not to them a dull, never-ceasing fight, stimulated by a fear of the workhouse in the end.

I am anxious to describe how the poor inhabitants of this fishing port live, and how the Norman peasants of the valleys round about live also. The economy of their lives, and the economy of the Norman agricultural system, may surely be studied with advantage. Seeing how fat and content the people are, and how they are able, year after year, to export more of their produce to us; we may gradually approach something like the reason why the English working classes, who earn on an average at least one-fourth more than the French working classes, suffer from lack of food, while their neighbours have, if not plenty, enough. It has been said a hundred times that a French cook, or a French labourer's wife, will make a given amount of food of any kind go twice as far as an English one. But nobody has yet, as far as I know, been at the pains of showing in detail, the differences which exist between French household economy and British wasteful housekeeping. Beyond a doubt we are an exceedingly wasteful people. Every man lives in the expectation of becoming rich. We scatter our

means not so prodigally and recklessly, perhaps, as the Americans do, but still in scorn of prudence. The Frenchman never admits his imagination to the control of his expenditure. He does not run even weekly bills. Day by day he pays for his food, and buys where he can buy cheapest, for he is independent of the dealer. He has not a set of tradesmen (I am speaking of the middle-class Frenchmen) who call for orders. His cook goes daily to the market for all things that are to be had cheap there, just as the housewives do here. It will be most interesting and most important to show how the simpler marketing of our neighbours helps, as much as their superior economy in cooking, to that general provision of sufficient food which makes the life of the masses here less burdensome to them and to the community than are the lives of our work-folk and our poor to them and to the rate-payers.

There is national, there is international, as well as individual waste of food. There is waste wherever there is a lack of means of regularly and rapidly transmitting food from the markets where it is superabundant to the markets where it is scarce. It is then obviously the duty of Governments, it is for

the material welfare of nations, that every possible encouragement should be given to the perfection of lines of communication among agricultural and manufacturing nations, so that the sudden wants of each may be supplied, that the superabundance of one may fill up the deficiency in the other. Take an example I find under my eyes. At this present moment I am informed France is actually exporting clover to England. Five or six years ago the merchandise trade between this port and Newhaven did not exceed 700 tons a month. The company were glad to get even that a month, and now the freightage of the line averages 3,000 tons a month, although there is opposition by Honfleur and elsewhere. Honfleur, for instance, seems to have taken possession of the old Dieppe trade in fresh provisions. The benefits of rapid and regular intercommunication become apparent wherever there is a sudden plenty here or in England. Mackerel, for instance, are often imported here when they are in great quantities in England; albeit there is a duty on them. It is curious to watch the effect of free trade, and of the least restriction or protection on goods that are perishable. The observation tends to prove how great the benefits

will be to all when free trade shall be the rule among the nations of the Continent. I give you an example I heard a day or two since.

At one time some thirty English luggers were in the habit of bringing loads of oysters to this port for sale, where they sold well, although a light duty was levied on them. It seems, however, that the susceptibilities of the English were aroused when French fish-boats endeavoured to do a trade at Newhaven. They were warned off. Thereupon the English luggers were driven from Dieppe. The result has been that when English oysters are in demand here, French boats go to Newhaven to buy them out of the English boats. Of the oyster culture of Cancale and Granville, and the abundance that is likely to be found shortly in the Bay of St. Brieuc, I shall have to speak presently.

But it is impossible to walk along the busy quays of Dieppe now-a-days without being struck by the daily increasing importance of the trade of France with England. Opposite the Western Railway Station lie noble screw-steamers, that have lately been most profitably engaged in carrying Liverpool cotton from Grimsby to this port. This new line of communication with us was for some long time an in-

different speculation, but it is now a sound and profitable one—the line doing a weekly average of five hundred tons. There are at the present time the following sea lines of communication between this country and England :—

1.	Hull and Dunkirk	Goods.	
2.	Grimsby and Dieppe	,,	
3.	London and Dunkirk	Goods and passengers.	
4.	,, Calais	,,	,,
5.	,, Boulogne	,,	,,
6.	,, Dieppe	,,	
7.	,, Paris	,,	
8.	,, Havre	Goods and passengers.	
9.	,, Charente	Goods.	
10.	,, Bordeaux	,,	
11.	Dover and Calais	Goods and passengers.	
12.	Folkestone and Boulogne	,,	,,
13.	Newhaven and Dieppe	,,	,,
14.	Littlehampton and Honfleur	,,	,,
15.	,, St. Malo	,,	,,
16.	Southampton and Havre	,,	,,
17.	,, Honfleur	,,	,,
18.	,, St. Malo	,,	,,
19.	Poole and Cherbourg	,,	,,
20.	Liverpool and Havre	Goods.	
21.	,, Bordeaux	,,	
22.	,, Honfleur	,,	

These twenty-two lines are so many arteries that give vigour to both countries. They are the cords

that are more likely to hold the two countries together than any international *fêtes* and compliments. They extend immeasurably the market of the producer of perishable articles. By the international tariff just issued, which lies before me, I see that by the Western Railway of France, by the Dieppe steamers, and the Brighton Railway, heavy beasts and bulky merchandise, and thousands of kilogrammes of perishable market food, can be passed from the Paris market to the London market, or *vice versâ* within three days. But the tariff is higher than it need be. Although the goods traffic is increasing rapidly, it would be at once doubled if the directors of the Dieppe and Newhaven Steamship Company would look for profit in a vast, steady, carrying business at a cheap rate, instead of a comparatively small and fluctuating one at a high rate. The whole portion of the importation of those descriptions of food which are cheaper in this country than in England, lies in the establishment of a cheap and regular carrying agency. This agency does not at the present moment exist in a satisfactory condition between England and France. If it did exist, a hundred speculations in produce would take place which are now out of the question. Gigantic trans-

actions with very small profits are the rule in these days; so that a rise in the price of freight of 1s. per ton is death to many international commercial operations. It seems that it is very difficult to make, not only the protectionist directors of foreign railways see the impolicy of maintaining high rates which restrict commercial operations, but English directors also. The rates on the Western Railway of France are low, because the competition of the Seine and of Paris direct to London by the river is severe. But wherever there is no opposition, they who govern the land and water highways appear firmly determined to prefer high rates and restricted operations to those low rates which would give them a steady and ever-increasing carrying business. It is the restrictive policy of these men which hampers the trade, and especially the trade in food and articles of the first necessity, between the two countries. Yet, in spite of these men and the custom houses, the trade insists upon increasing, if only at a snail's pace. I find that the men who have guided and directed the great trade that has sprung up between Paris and London, *viâ* Normandy and our south coast, have been unceasing in their endeavours to strike away the bureaucratic and other obstacles which are in the way of

a free and full circulation of commerce between the two countries. They have also sought to extend their through traffic in every direction. For instance, they endeavoured in May last to prevail upon the English North Western Railway authorities to come to an arrangement by which a direct through route might be established from Paris to Manchester and Liverpool, and all the north-western industrial centres of the United Kingdom. The proposal was a most liberal one for the London and North Western Railway. These were the conditions, which I have on the best authority:—

1. That the rates should be based upon the tariff already in existence between London, Dieppe, and Paris.

2. That the fixed charge for consignment should be 3s.

3. That the through rates should be fixed as follows:—For the undermentioned distances north of London to Dieppe:—

Under 150 miles the London and Dieppe rates increased by	100	per cent.
151 to 200	120	„
201 to 300	150	„
301 to 400	200	„

For the undermentioned distances north of London to Paris:—

Under 100 miles the London and Paris rate increased by	40	per cent.
101 to 150	50	„
151 to 200	60	„
201 to 250	80	„

251 to 300	100 per cent.
301 to 350	120 „
351 to 400	140 „

This proposition, based on the rates which are in force between Paris and London, was most advantageous to the London and North-Western Railway Company. During the negociations which ensued the Dieppe authorities made a further concession, which gave a still larger per-centage to the London and North-Western Railway, but without avail. The lords of Euston-square finally declined to open a through route between Paris and the north of England, even on the liberal terms that were offered to them. In this they imitated the pernicious and short-sighted example of the continental lines, which impede the flow of produce from one district to another, and from one country to another, at every turn. Now, the lowest rate of carriage is not always the cheapest. The line which is the most rapid and the most regular will prove more advantageous to the merchant than the low-rated long route. The through route, for instance, which might and should have been established between Liverpool, London, Dieppe, and Paris, albeit its rates would have possibly been more than 32s. per ton (which I believe is the actual rate be-

tween Liverpool and Rouen *vid* Grimsby), would have been the preferable mode of transit in many instances; for this reason, viz.: that whereas it is impossible to carry a bale of cotton from Liverpool *vid* Grimsby to Dieppe and Rouen in less than ten days, such transit is possible by a through route *vid* the London and North-Western in three days.

I have dwelt somewhat on the means of carrying food and other merchandise between the two countries, because free and rapid intercommunication must be the basis of any extension of the benefits of the French food markets to England. We are apt to cherish a contempt for the foods peculiar to foreign nations; nor are foreigners free from this prejudice against ourselves. While, then, practical men are endeavouring in every direction to break down the barriers which still impede the rapid commercial intercommunication of nations, surely it is useful to inquire how our humble neighbours live and flourish; how it is that, although most of the necessaries of life are as dear in France as they are in England, a French judge can make a decent show in his sphere of society on £400 a year. There can be no reason why no variety should be ever brought to the Irishman who lives on potatoes, to the Scotchman's porridge, and to the

beans and bread of the Englishman. We wonder how our neighbours live because we are a wasteful race ourselves, and they that have thrift which turns every grain of seed, and every ounce of animal matter, to account. Our population knows but three or four varieties of food, and will have no other kind, and must have these whether there there be a plague upon one or all of them or not. Did not the starving Irish peasantry, when they were worn to shadows, push the diet of maize from them? Yet was it good and wholesome food. The Norman peasant lives fat and snug under his warm thatch, and the fisherman of this rocky coast rears his hardy race under the cliffs in comfort, varying his food and sweetening and seasoning it, and using in its preparation economies that are unknown to the working classes of our prodigal race. When he fails—it is by drink;—and drunkenness is stealing, like a plague, over Le Pollet and Dieppe.

CHAPTER II.

ROUND ABOUT ARQUES.

THIS great plateau of the Aliermont, that is packed between the valleys of Eaulne and Bethune, and through which threads a road at least of Merovingian origin, presents to us in extraordinary concentration both the industrial strength and the agricultural fertility of Normandy. The broad valley that stretches from Dieppe hither, and which then branches to the east and to the south, presents landscapes as rich and fat as any part of Kent. The broad green meadows are dotted everywhere with cattle; the farm-houses are trim, and snug, and solid; and pungent odours steal upon the traveller from the cider presses as he passes. It is a land of plenty, with here and there busy factories planted in the midst. St. Nicholas, for instance, is a watchmaking village, of 2,000 inhabitants, where the work-folk flourish, the neces-

saries of life being abundant about them. Here is a happy mixture of the agricultural and manufacturing element. The men can earn about 15s. a week, and the women between 8s. and 9s. In this quiet place chronometers and astronomical instruments are made. Take another village of these valleys, say Machouville. It is of the earth—earthy. A hamlet affording a few thatched roofs to some old gardeners and cultivators of vegetables (which flourish exceedingly in this light soil); its humble foundations are like nearly every cottage round about, on Roman or feudal ruins. It was a port six or seven centuries ago, and vegetables grow where ships sailed. The old folk of the place have had a dim memory of the ancient days carried down from father to son, and some among them call their emerald pasturages *salés* to this day. Hence the view of the immense Norman meadow lands is magnificent, covered, as the entire landscape is, with cattle browsing upon the rich herbage. These flocks and droves do not all belong, it should be understood, to rich proprietors. There are the common lands (*communes*), gifts of the dukes or kings of old, where the poor man's ox or cow has the right to roam and feed. I am told that here there is a cow belonging to each cottage—that she is the nurse of the chil-

dren, the care of the old people, and the friend of the whole family, whose entire fortune she frequently represents—so that, in looking at these herds of cattle stretching far and wide, I see not only the wealth of landlords and of farmers, but also the support and the comfort of the peasants; for the agricultural family that is able by hook or by crook to keep a cow is provided against all the sharper necessities of the labourer's life. The valleys about Arques, that of Varenne, which is behind the majestic ruins of the castle, the ancient forest; Bethune, beyond the forest; and the river winding through all the rural wealth, past Neufchatel, are as rich in historical interest as they are wealthy from the agriculturist's point of view. This little town of Arques, built up upon Roman and feudal ruins, where crumbling masses of walls meet you at every step, and where the new is everywhere plastered and cobbled upon the old, with its shambling streets of Rome, of Lombardy, and of the Burgundians; where Roman and ancient Gallic medals, and fragments of chapels and priories are plentiful, is a scene of immortal memories—a scene peopled with the shades of Geoffroy Plantagenet, Philip Augustus, Richard Cœur de Lion, and Henri Quatre; to-day a show place from Dieppe, inhabited

with a ruddy, well-to-do agricultural population. Here Henri Quatre won his kingdom, and closed the martial glories that encompassed the feudal castle. It is a grand ruin perched on a noble eminence, and peeping over its tumbled masses of wall. On this breezy day nothing is to be seen around save plain and wood, and peaceful husbandry. The only breaks in the monotonous moaning of the wind are the blows of some sturdy yokels who are stripping the walnut-trees in the valley below. The *enceinte* of the old feudal fortress is now a vast poultry-yard, and I saw one or two fine breeds pecking about the ancient keep, and by the silent dungeons. Everywhere, in a word, is rare natural fertility. Three or four old crones, leaning on heavy sticks, issue suddenly from the walls, as the stranger winds up the narrow steep to the castle, and beg in a whining voice. But I make bold to state that these ancient dames have not been pinched and torn by poverty into the hideous forms, covered with old clothes, which are presented to the traveller beseeching his charity. They are by no means to be taken as evidence that there is poverty round about the ancient bourg of Arques. These ladies of a certain age, I warrant, drive a very pretty business when Dieppe's fashionable visitors shoal

hither daily. I dropped a few sous in their hands as I passed, and they were heard, a few moments later, discussing the relative excellences of "les bonnes liqueurs." I wonder whether they can get Chartreuse to their liking in this rough but capacious and noisy "Hotel du Château d'Arques," where the landlady is making a prodigious salad under the eye of a donkey boy, who has just arrived with a party, and is waiting for his mug of cider.

The agricultural system and agricultural life is rapidly changing throughout this district. The simple customs of the old time are fast fading away. The railroad, the steam-power in the factories of St. Nicolas, the rapid transit of agricultural produce, these are changing influences which the *Pays de Caux* is bending every day. The people of this region are a hardy, burly race, quite differing in many essentials from the races on the other or eastern side of the valley, who are Celts. The main difference which old men who have lived hereabouts notice and deplore is the disappearance of the patriarchal, the family element, among the agricultural population. If the Norman peasant, if the *Cauchois* is not devoting much time to his mental improvement, or caring enough for the schooling of his

children, he is becoming knowing as his master, and the people with whom his master deals are becoming knowing under the keenness of competition, and with the daily spread of markets. It is still the rule that all the men who work on a farm eat all their meals at the homestead. It is true that they get very little fresh meat indeed. The pig is the main provider of animal food here, as he is in our agricultural districts. But the farmers' maids know how to chop up masses of vegetables, and to cast a lump of meat or pork or grease into it, and with cheap and simple materials to make a great cauldron of nourishing soup, round which the sturdy ploughboys will gather hungrily and heartily betimes on winter mornings. With an unlimited supply of stout wheaten bread (the pride and staff of this country) a most nutritious and ample meal is made. There is no stint of bread; each man may eat to his utmost of it. In the middle of the day the homestead is prepared to receive all the farm workers for dinner. It is one dish, a *pot-au-feu*, sometimes fish if the supply be plentiful on the coast, sometimes soup again; but there is always the abundant bread and good cider. The supper is the third meal of bread and cheese or bacon. This eating in common has great advantages. It can be cheaply

done, and the soup, which the farmer's wife knows how to make grateful to the palate of her husband's labourers, can be varied. To-day the chief component part is sorrel, to-morrow it is onions; but the *potage* is ever warm and comforting and sustaining. The other day, dropping accidentally into the common room or kitchen of a farm, we found the women setting forth upon the board for dinner a great stew of mussels. These, with the unlimited supply of bread—on which I must always insist—were the men's dinner of the day.

It was the custom of the farmer to preside at the repasts of his men; and in that old time the wife, with her maids, served all before they themselves set down. But, just as in England, the simplicity of farm life is disappearing, or has disappeared, so even in these valleys *madame la fermière* has caught a touch of gentility, and she and her lord now eat their meals in a room apart, leaving the workfolk alone in the kitchen. When the wives or daughters of the workmen are regularly employed round the farm, they also have their meals in the common room. But the women and children are mostly employed in odd jobs, and provide their own food. This they can do much better than the English agriculturist's wife,

for the reason that they are mistresses of the art of making cheap nutritious food. In offering a man hospitality, we tender him a knife and fork. The French countryman would tender him a spoon. The Breton head of a family is bound always, according to an ancient saying, to find for his brothers and sisters a bed and a spoon under the paternal roof. An old gentleman lamenting the other day to me the whirr and stir of these days of unrestrained competition which, among other calamities, had brought about, he contended, the destruction of the fame of the Dieppe herring, nobody caring for reputation now, and everybody lusting after money; this old gentleman said even the ancient and poetic veneration for the shepherd, which was general all through these historical districts, and had been so from time out of date, was fading out of men's minds. Some years ago, when a barrel of herrings left Dieppe with the Dieppe brand upon it, everybody knew that it contained the best herrings in the world; and now they are packed off anyhow, the great object being to save time and make money fast. In the same way the commercial spirit was invading the country, and the shepherd was not now venerated as in the old time. Still, he is to this hour respected and looked up to

beyond every other agricultural labourer. Passing his life out in these broad prairies among his flocks, with the little house on wheels for his only shelter, he is the first and chief care of the homestead. He is served first from the farmer's own table. He is an authority. There is a fire in the village, and the shepherd is sent for to put it out. I have a story of a certain seafaring man of Dieppe. He had been a pilot. He had been in all things a prosperous man. The sea had ever been kind to him, and his locker was well stored. He made ventures in fish, bought, I apprehend, a ship—perhaps for the Newfoundland fisheries—and then on a sudden his good fortune forsook him; everything went wrong with him. His gold turned to lead. Misfortune melted his property into thin air. His neigbours wondered how it had come to pass that the old lucky pilot had suddenly fallen on such days of unmixed evil. The explanation —to them an all-sufficient one—came in due time. He had on a certain occasion passed a slight on a shepherd; such was the faith in shepherds in this country within the memory of living men; but, according to my old friend, it is all disappearing before the knowingness of the present time. Even the *Pollet* fishermen, according to him, are getting

this modern sharpness, at the same time that they are degenerating, and the elderly fishwives will no longer tell the stranger any of the ancient legends of their race. They have become ashamed of them.

Let us hope that something of the simplicity of these ancient valleys will be left to them, when they are brought into closer contact with the feverish speculation of modern times, by the railway that is destined some day to run through these noble pasturages, and open up such fine producing districts as Neufchatel and the adjacent *arrondissements*. It is extraordinary, indeed, that this highly-productive district has been so long left without a railway. The plans of one have been accepted, and the concession has been awarded, I find, to the Western Railway of France; but the Western authorities are in no hurry to proceed with the work. Had such a line been wanted in England, it would not have been handed over to a company that has already a harmful monopoly of these districts, and that impedes the developments of their great natural riches. With such magnificent and vast extent of fruitful soil stretching in noble valleys away from the port of Dieppe into the interior, the food production of this part of the country will no doubt be doubled when it shall please

the Western Railway Company to lay down the valley line along a tract which I heard an enthusiastic Dieppois say the other day, seemed as if it had been designed by the *bon Dieu* for a cheap and highly advantageous iron way. As it is, it appears that Rouen and Dieppe consume all, or nearly all, the farm produce of the districts that lie between them. The valley railway, however, will it is believed, open up a new and abundant food market, by bringing a splendid agricultural district into direct communication with Dieppe and England on the one hand, and with Paris on the other. The poorer people of the agricultural villages that are within reach of the Dieppe market, undoubtedly turn the produce of their cow or of their garden into money, and the result is, that they have not an abundance of milk for home consumption. But they get the good in one shape or the other. The peasant women, who take their baskets full of butter and eggs to Dieppe, buy meat and groceries with the sale-money—luxuries which are of vast importance to them. Moreover, the market incites them to turn every inch of their land to good account. The splendid vegetable gardens of this district show the strong tendency of accessible markets to stimulate production in every

way. Yet, with this lesson under their eyes, with an export and import trade increasing every year, in spite of them, the *Cauchois* people remain utterly without enterprise. They have no notion of opening a new market for themselves, for their fisheries, nor of making improvements, nor of embarking in trade speculations of any kind whatsoever. Through these splendid valleys, opening to the coast opposite England, a great trade is destined to roll; but it is said strangers must take the port and town of Dieppe in hand first. The natives will do nothing. They have neither commercial courage nor personal ambition. The seafaring population, both Saxon and Celtic, are degenerating rapidly. The trawlers have half destroyed the near fishery by their reckless system of fishing. The *Pollet* sailors who go forth to seek their bread on the banks of Newfoundland—the Terre-Neuvians, as they are called—carry their loads of cod fish, not back to their native place, but to Marseilles, to Bordeaux, and to Cette. They bring nothing home save diseases, which undermine their constitution, and consequently those of their children. They are away seven months in the year, yet they bring no trade to their native port. Some time since an extraordinarily enterprising Dieppois spirit resolved

to make a venture in cod fish, and to bring home part of his takings at Newfoundland, to prepare them for a market at Dieppe, and to send them thence for sale. He had a notion that he would have a special advantage in the market by this means. But the foolish fellow only knew of one market. He sent his fish to Tours and thereabouts, where he put them in direct competition with his own fish, which had been cured and sent from Cette and Bordeaux. He found, in other words, that he was underselling himself. And so this little enterprise was brought to a speedy conclusion. Why, it was observed, did not this speculative fisherman send his cod fish, say, to the Danubian Principalities, where he would have found a large, ready and highly profitable market. The answer is, he was of Dieppe, and had no more idea of finding out a new market than the trawlers have of sending fish anywhere save to Rouen and Paris. A most intelligent gentleman, who had been born in Dieppe, said to me a few days since:—

"Life is very simple here. We have not changed so much as they have in other places. Our habits are of somewhat ancient date. We breakfast at eight; our dinner in the middle of the day is just a *pot-au-feu* and some vegetables, and then we have a substantial

supper early in the evening. The workpeople of the town are better off than they were: they eat meat three or four times a week; vegetables are cheap, and sometimes there is plenty of the coarser kinds of fish —as skate, &c.; for drink they get a wholesome cider at 1d. a litre; but the habit of drinking has spread all over the town. The increase in the consumption of brandy is alarmingly rapid. The workfolk—even the fishermen now, the trawlers especially—are spendthrifts, and come ashore and eat and drink what they have made by their last voyage. Their nets have dragged up and disturbed the beds of the sea, so that the fish no longer come as regularly as they did. There is not, therefore, the steady income to be made that could be relied upon twenty or thirty years ago, when a simple fisherman could earn his £60 or £70 a year regularly. From lack of proper regulations and precautions, a splendid, and regular, and reliable source of food has been spoiled and broken—a hardy, and sober, and steady race of men have been broken up, so that now the Dieppe fisherman is careful not to bring his sons up to the sea."

This is a melancholy condition of things. Other facts bear out the truth of the foregoing description. Dieppe (it is an old saying) is built upon

oyster shells. The fine road stretching away to Pourville is a vast oyster-bed. An enthusiastic consumer said to me, that lying off Pourville, the wrecked little village on the Scie (the name of which lives in men's memories only because the Duchesse de Longueville escaped thence), are the very finest oysters in the world. "And," he added, I fear, on insufficient evidence, "they are positively rotting, as they will when left undredged, the upper layer destroying the under one. I cannot tell you why all this food is left to destruction under the sea, close to our shore. I can only answer you that it is so. At one time a hundred English oyster boats might be seen busy off our coast dredging, and a fast ship came regularly and collected their cargoes and carried them off to London. But our authorities warned them off, and now the beds are left, and nobody has the advantage of them." This statement is in strange contradiction to all that we have heard of late years of the Emperor's desire to introduce the oyster as a general article of food in his dominions. We have the learned labours of M. Coste, and his activity at St. Brieuc, opposed to the Dieppois assertion. I suspect, however, the truth is that, while M. Coste can show, in the fields of his learned operations,

hurdles loaded with clusters of young oysters—nay, even 20,000 in a single hurdle—sponges and worms have been busy along the shores by Dieppe and by Pourville, and the dream of covering every rock from Dieppe to Brest with healthy oyster-seed is very far from being realised. I cannot find hereabouts the least activity in the oyster trade, nor the least sign of an oyster fishery. All whom I question on the subject shrug their shoulders, and just point vaguely to the Parc aux Huitres, a small space where the French process of "greening" oysters goes on. We do know for certain that the oyster-banks of the Bay of St. Brieuc once gave employment to two hundred boats, and that now they barely employ twenty. It is interesting to the economist, as well as to the scientific man, to know that a single oyster will cast forth a dust-cloud consisting of 2,000,000 of eggs. But is it not a pity, while dreaming of the days when every rock is to be covered with this fine food; to allow the food that is ready to our hands to be destroyed by the sponge and the worm? The day will come when the paralysing regulations which appear to exist between this country and France in the matter of oysters, will be recollected with something like shame in both countries. One stormy morning

last week, when I was at Dieppe, I found that between 60 and 70 English oyster-boats had run for shelter into the port. The brawny English fishermen swarmed in the town, and looked very much out of their element indeed. Here they were, with their cargoes of oysters, not one of which they were permitted to land, although they would have been eagerly bought up, considering the price which oysters fetch at this moment in Paris! But the most liberal concession for which they could hope, if they were detained in port some days and should become distressed for want of money, would be the permission to sell two or three thousand oysters by auction to provide for their necessities.

M. Coste can produce 20,000 oysters in a single hurdle no larger than one stalk of corn in a field. Then how his vision expands. Twenty thousand oysters are worth £16. One oyster produces 2,000,000 oysters. The Bay of St. Brieuc is to become one vast food-bed; and yet the sponge and the worm are destroying not the oysters that are as yet only in the vivid imagination of the philosopher, but the perfect oyster that is ripe for red pepper, and that yearns for the lemon juice.

Let me shortly describe how a certain race of

workmen live who, while they dwell in villages some league or so away from Dieppe, nevertheless continuously pursue some town trades. The Dieppe masons, for instance, come from one village, and the Dieppe carpenters from another. A skilful mason will earn from 2s. to 2s. 6d. a day, while a common labourer will get 1s. a day. The manner in which these men live differs in every respect from the way in which an English mason or carpenter will exist. The English mason or carpenter is better off than his French *confrère;* earns more wages, and pretends to enjoy a more generous diet. But, given a certain sum to live upon, see how much better the Frenchman turns his money to account in the shape of food than an Englishman can. To begin with: when the French mason or carpenter rises in his village home, say on a winter morning long before sunrise, his wife prepares for him a steaming bowl of onion or other vegetable soup. This, with his lump of bread, gives him a substantial start for his day's labour. When he sets forth, it is his invariable custom to carry with him to Dieppe an enormous lump of bread; this, with a bit of cheese and a litre of cider, represents his dinner. In the summer he will get fruit in plenty, instead of his cheese or piece of bacon.

His work done, he returns home to his village, and here finds a supper of soup or bacon. He gets something like variety as well as cheapness in his diet. He is fortunately situated in this respect, that he can vary his table with mussels, or skate, or conger-eel. The diet he gets altogether does not produce, it may be, that animal heat and vigour which are seen in the English race of workmen, but he is sufficiently fed for his climate and his work. He is not reduced to that horrible monotony which is the saddest part of the English workman's *régime*. His wife has many resources, and never cries that the cupboard is bare, and that there is absolutely nothing for him to dip his spoon into. The *Cauchois* mason twenty years ago was even an exceedingly prosperous, and a happy and an honourable man. Twenty years ago he would have deemed himself for ever dishonoured had he been found in a state of intoxication, and spending his substance in a Dieppe *cabaret* on Saturday night, instead of taking it home to his village for his wife and children; and now all the younger workmen, after they are paid their wages on Saturday night, go to the *cabaret*, and seldom make their way straight out of the town on the road home. Even the boys (who are put to hod

work when they should be at school) drink. I am told that only a few of the old men, who will not forget the dignity of their fathers, and the sober habits in which they were brought up, keep clear of the brandy-bottle.

The French delight in what may be called striking statistics. Some 20 years ago M. de Gasparin presented a series of ingenious statistics, through which he arrived at the conclusion that there were at that time 48,000,000 of fowls in France, and that they laid annually 1,920,000,000 of eggs. Now, if instead of such flights of figures, French statisticians would keep the record of the national exportations and importations brought down to the latest possible moment, so that we might be able to contrast the progress of trade in this year with that of last year, in this quarter with that of the last quarter, they would do work more useful than that on which they now engage their eminent talents. But how stands the case? In the *Annuaire de l'Economie Politique* for the present year we get the French exportations and importations of 1863 only. This table is excellently arranged. The single fault I have to find with it is, what I may call in these days the antiquity of its facts. On one page I find that France sent us goods

to the extent of £30,720,000, and, on the opposite page, that we sent goods to France to the value of £18,440,000. The increase in our imports from France has been prodigious during the last two years. In proof of this I have obtained a return of the provisions which have been shipped by the Dieppe and Newhaven steam line to England from the former port in the months of July, August, and September of 1865, namely:—Oxen, 38; calves, 123; sheep, 148; pigs, 631; butter, 680 tons; eggs, 547 tons; fruits and vegetables, 145 tons; flour, 341 tons; salted pork, 16 tons.* And this in spite of the lower freights of the Honfleur and Littlehampton line, which has drawn a great quantity of fresh food in that direction. These figures justify the belief of enlightened traffic managers that, when a cheap and regular through goods traffic is established all over France, and is perfected in England, an enormous increase in the international provision trade will take place.

* In the first eleven months of 1864 we imported 141,778 oxen, bulls, and cows; and 196,030 in 1865. In the former year we also imported 412,469 sheep, and in the latter year 763,084.

CHAPTER III.

LE PAYS DE CAUX.

Let me draw a comparison between the exportations by the Newhaven and Dieppe steam-boats for July, August, and September in 1864 and the same months in 1865. I have already given the figures of the exportations of 1865 during the three months in question. I will add the tables for 1864, which enable me still further to confirm the assertions of those who are interested in the trade of carrying food, on the vital importance of a rapid and regular system of international transit. In 1864, in the months of July, August, and September, the steam-boat carried from Dieppe to Newhaven no less than 455 tons of fruits and vegetables. These fruits and vegetables were comparatively cheap on this side of the Channel, and the supply was deficient in England; whereas, this year, fruit and vegetables have been abundant in

England. The consequence has been that during the last three months only 145 tons have been carried *vid* Dieppe to England. Let me note another contrast. In the three summer months of 1864 only 10 tons of flour were exported by this route, whereas this year 341 tons have been sent to England. There is another contrast between the two years which is suggestive. In 1864 the articles of exportation consisted of fruits and vegetables, butter, eggs, and flour only. But in 1865, oxen, calves, sheep, pigs, and salted pork have been added to the list. The exportation of cattle, *vid* Dieppe, is quite a new trade—one that has been provoked by the presence of the plague in England and its absence from the great grazing lands of the north of France. In a previous Chapter, I drew the reader's attention to the desirability of establishing on a wide basis cheap and regular through rates for the carriage of food and other perishable articles, and I remarked on the decrease in trade suffered by the Dieppe and Newhaven route in consequence of the competition of the cheap Honfleur and Littlehampton line; but I was not prepared to find so great a change as that which has taken place in twelve months. The export of butter in July, August, and September, 1864,

amounted to 755 tons. In the corresponding months of 1865 it had fallen to 680 tons, being a diminution of 75 tons. In the same months the exportation of eggs had fallen from 1,593 tons in 1864 to 547 tons, being a diminution of 1,046 tons. The loss of trade, then, to the Dieppe and Newhaven line has been, in consequence of high freightage, no less than 1,121 tons in three months. In short, attracted by the charms of cheap carriage, butter and eggs, to use my informant's expression, "have taken another route."

It is when we consider the extent of the commercial transactions which annually take place between France and England that we are thoroughly awakened to the importance of creating as many channels of communication as possible, and of making these as cheap as possible, between the two countries. In 1863 the value of French exportations to England reached nearly thirty-two millions sterling, being more than the value of the exports to the whole of Germany, Belgium, and Italy put together. In the same year the importations from England into France amounted in monetary value to about twenty-three millions and a half sterling; making the value of the trade between the two countries over fifty-five millions sterling per annum. This gigantic trade, which

is ever increasing, which has indeed greatly increased within the last two years, is surely one which should stimulate the energies of railway and steam-ship company directors. New and cheap means of transit must indubitably re-awaken the enterprise of communities that now permit their trade to languish, and will not gather the abundance that only awaits the industry of their hands. In my last chapter I touched upon the languishing and neglected oyster trade of this coast. I observe from the statistics of French trade generally in 1863, that there was a decline, and a serious one, in the production of French fisheries in this year. Take the cod fishery: the number of men engaged in it were 618 less than the average number of the five preceding years, and the produce showed a diminution of 38 per cent. on the same average. The whale fishery shows a notable decrease. The herring fishery was 80,465 metrical *quintaux* less than in 1862. In this year the value of the fish exported from France was £640,000. We are told that the Emperor, bringing once more to bear upon the prosperity of his subjects his knowledge gained in exile among the English people, took measures for the spread of a taste for oysters among the Parisians. It is said that to this end he ordered oysters, packed

in straw, to be distributed regularly for sale at the Paris wine-shops, with stones laid upon them to keep them closed. Be the story true or false, there can be no doubt that the sale of oysters has become an enormous one under the Second Empire. In 1856, M. Moreau de Jonnès gave the consumption of oysters in Paris alone, for the year 1851, as amounting in value to £26,848. I find the consumption of oysters for 1832 valued at £29,240; and that, in 1847, the annual value had risen to £69,920. You see that in 1851 Paris consumed almost the national supply of 1847; and since 1851 the consumption has much more than doubled, with prices as high as those of London. It is estimated that the oyster beds of Cancale, near St. Malo, yield 100 millions of oysters annually, and that 60 millions are produced from Courseulles, near Caen. This is without taking into consideration the oyster beds of Dieppe, or Havre, or Dunkirk. You have seen already how much is to be expected in the way of oysters from the energy of the Dieppois, or the poor abandoned people of Pourville. I find that M. de Jonnès, so far back as 1856, found reason to express his regret at the neglected riches—"prospérités délaissées"—which lay along the coasts of his country. "We should remember, however,"

he says, "that it was by the help of their fisheries that the Dutch rose out of their marshes, put themselves at the head of the maritime and commercial Powers of Europe, and, in the 17th century, made themselves governors of the destinies of the world. It was with her fisheries that England laid the foundations of her empire, and that she now commands, with succeeding generations of hardy sailors, an annual food product of £3,000,000." It was in a work by the same author on the agriculture of France, which appeared in the revolutionary year of 1848, that he first drew the attention of his countrymen to the productive power of the French soil; and deduced, from the great increase in production which had been accomplished since the time of Louis XIV., strong reasons why the attention of all his enlightened countrymen should be given to the grateful earth that was still ready to double her produce under the care of skill and science. He showed that the hectare of land which produced eight hectolitres of corn in 1700, produced more than thirteen hectolitres with the skilful husbandry of 1840. Having surveyed the agriculture of each division of France, and seen that the north produced almost double the cereal crops of the south, and marked the various kinds of

food men of the north and men of the south, as of the east and the west, were compelled, by the nature of the soil about them, to consume, he dwelt on the great good that must come from the establishment of many and rapid lines of communication between the distant provinces of the empire. He remarked that the corn that could be bought for 14f. in the north cost 17f. in the south; and he shrewdly observed that this difference of 12 or 14 per cent. applied to vast quantities, could not but have a most harmful effect on the mass of consumers. He held that easier means for the distribution of agricultural produce, by the opening of new roads, would be an inestimable benefit to agriculture. In the north, in the regions where I am writing, is the great granary of the empire. Vast strides have been made here since Arthur Young visited it, and described part of old Normandy as "uncultivated and poverty-stricken." Could his shade glide over the hills and through the valleys, and wander hither and thither between Dieppe, Havre, and Honfleur, taking Beuzeville, known often as Beuzeville the Granary, on account of the fair and rich crops thereabouts; or survey the close-packed garden cultivation that stretches away upon the plateau east of Dieppe, and dips to the little

bathing-place of Puys, and even creeps up the rugged sides of Cæsar's Camp or the old Celtic Cité de Limes; he would see the sturdiness and intelligence and prosperity of the modern Norman race. The patches of leeks, and Savoy cabbage, and turnips, and Swedes, and carrots that are cultivated behind the *falaises* by Neuville, are magnificent crops. Not an inch of soil appears to be wasted, and not an inch of it appears to be ungrateful. Corn is abundant, and is largely consumed, as I have already had occasion to remark when describing the diet of the Norman farm-labourer. There is no stint of good wheaten bread in this northern region. In the two northern regions, or the northern half of France—and albeit these two regions produce nearly double the amount of wheat that is grown in the south—the inhabitants themselves consume 65 per cent. of their cereal produce. The people of the south, on the contrary, consume only 35 per cent. of theirs, making up their food supply with buckwheat and chestnuts. It should be understood that this consumption includes that of the animals kept in each region. M. de Jonnès makes a curious comparison between the eastern half and the western half of France. He shows that the two equal populations consume an equal quantity of agri-

cultural produce, but that the nature of this produce varies remarkably. The west of France consumes seven per cent. more corn than the east: 25 per cent. less potatoes, six times as much buckwheat, and four times the quantity of chestnuts. It is this comparison which led this writer to make some excellent remarks. He says:—

"Food is the most difficult thing to reduce to the science of statistics. The reason is that there is a perpetual movement in agricultural produce, and that it travels in all directions in search of consumers. A small rise in prices, a new land or water communication, the shifting of a mass of troops to a given point, sometimes even a false public rumour, will draw masses of food in a new direction to supply the inordinate demand, and will utterly change the habitual proportions of the alimentary supply in the locality whence it has been suddenly withdrawn The ease with which an equilibrium is again established in these masses of alimentary substance, by the substitution of one product for another that is deficient, or has increased in price, is a remarkable phenomenon in our social economy. It was known long ago that wine might take the place of bread; but in our days, corn has found a better auxiliary in the potato, and

in the varied productions of vegetable gardens. The more vegetable gardens are cultivated and improved, the greater will be the safety of the masses against scarcity or famine."

The growth of French wheat crops has been immense of late years in the great centres of it, in Picardy, in Poitou, in Normandy, in ancient Flanders and in Artois. There is 50 per cent. more corn for every inhabitant, than there was in the reign of Louis XVI. Most French economists, and M. de Jonnès is among the number, attribute this great increase of corn production to the revolution, which put an end to the law of primogeniture, and parcelled out the land among all the members of a family. This is a subject beyond my province. I will only say that the enormous increase in the number of small, of infinitesimal landed proprietors, had the effect of drawing vast numbers of people to the soil, and of attaching them to it. This revolution of property, according to the authority I have already quoted, raised the produce of each hectare of corn-land from 7 hectolitres to 13. It increased the number of Frenchmen living on wheaten bread from 35 in 100 to 60. Another fact which indicates the improvement of agriculture, and the increased com-

fort of the rural population, is the decrease in the growth and consumption of *meteil*, a mixed crop of wheat and rye. Rye crops appear where the land is poor, as in Champagne and Brittany. Great crops are grown also in Calvados, but it dwindles where improvements in agriculture appear. It is not to be seen where potatoes and garden crops are plentiful.

The great subdivisions of property which have been going on since the first Revolution, appear, according to the general statistics of France, at any rate to have greatly increased the agricultural produce of the soil, by leading possessors of patches of land to cultivate the best and the most advantageous crops. It is estimated that during the last sixty years wages have increased in the agricultural districts to this extent — that where the workman formerly earned 67f. he now earns 100f. The widespread cultivation of vegetables among the agricultural labourers and small proprietors in this country appears to be the foundation of the new comforts they enjoy. It is estimated that, of the 24,000,000 of the agricultural population of France, divided into 5,350,000 families of four and a half persons each, one half—that is to say, half these families—own land that gives an average annual yield of produce of £4 4s. What is this property? It is a thatched cottage,

with a garden, a hemp-field, and patches of potatoes and clover and buckwheat. There are two millions and a half of properties of this modest character. These are in the hands of families whose earnings average about £22 10s. per annum. They, however, bring the income up to £26 or £27 per annum, or about 2f. a day. The patch of land is the whole question. It represents good and solid food always available to the family in return for its labour. The potatoes and the pig, the buckwheat and the clover, are about the cottage. It is this patch of ground which the English agricultural labourer is always so anxious to rent. His great complaint is that his landlord will not rent him, even at a high price, the little field out of which, by dint of careful cultivation before and after his regular work-times, he could produce for his family the food which he cannot afford to buy for them in open market. Whatever may be said of the principle which has raised up two and a half millions of peasant proprietors in this country, it seems to be beyond a doubt that it has increased the production of the soil and given comfort and prosperity to 10,000,000 of the agricultural population of France. The agricultural population of France are fully alive to the benefits of possessing their own patch of land for vegetables, and buck-

wheat and clover. It is in order to buy a bit of land and a thatch that those crowds of *auvergnats* quit their sorry province year after year and travel to Paris to make themselves water-carriers and charcoal-dealers, to live a life of hardship and self-denial, in order to return ultimately within sight of the village church with a leather bag heavy enough to buy the field and the hut. The opportunity of having patches of land to cultivate, is of inestimable advantage to men of the labouring class; and the Celts who flourish along the coast between Eu and Dieppe, half sailors and half gardeners, or ploughboys, prosper because they have profitable use for their time on land as well as at sea. They prosper, moreover, because they are still comparatively a sober race, as it must be admitted the bulk of the Norman folk are, who hold to the soil and draw their substance from the land. They learn the art of besotting themselves when they go forth from their village to work in a town, like the masons who work in Dieppe. Their Norman cider, which, according to their poet's song, makes them "*gai-gai*," without getting into their heads, is their beverage. That of the Vallée d'Anges is of fine flavour, as is also much that is *not* of the Vallée d'Anges. But it seems to me, that the unsophisticated palate requires a great amount of

education before it is able to enjoy the cider that is found at the first little Norman *auberge*. A hundred times better is the worst of it, however, than the brandy, the consumption of which, according to the statistical returns, is increasing in France with frightful rapidity. On this head, M. de Jonnès made a few edifying remarks some years ago. Speaking of brandy, he said:—"The increase of this spirit has been so rapid, that the quantity manufactured now is four times that which was produced in 1788. This is a public calamity, for which there is no consolation save in the knowledge that the increase is worse in England, and that our brandy is of a better quality than that manufactured anywhere else." Amiable consolation! I doubt, however, whether the author has much substantial basis for his consolation now-a-days. I am sure I do not know in what part of England, in what corner of London, a more detestable, fiery compound could be discovered—I won't say than the camphre of the *égoutier*, but than the common brandy which is sold to sailors on the coasts of Normandy, or to the artisans in the manufacturing villages, say of this Pays de Caux; assuredly this is not an article of consumption of which we need desire to possess a thimbleful.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM ROUEN TO HAVRE.

BETWEEN Rouen and Havre the agriculture of Normandy is seen to advantage. The land laughs with its plenty. The villages twinkle in the fat valleys, and seem to be literally surfeited with produce. The gardens climb every hill; every field is lively with cattle; every stream murmurs over mill-wheels. The heights are crowned with noble woods; the unploughed land is lively with grey sheep browsing about the sky-blue house, upon wheels, of the mild-eyed shepherd. All the cottages breathe an air of comfort. None are squalid. The warm red brick with which their white walls are pointed, when they are not veined with black beams of wood, give happy bits of relief to the intense green of the prairies and the ruddy summits of the trees. The railway passes incessantly over well-known historic ground. We catch a glimpse of the

ruins of the famous Duchess of Longueville's castle; and now we are at St. Victor, where William the Conqueror founded an abbey, and where a statue of him may be seen by those who have leisure. Neither the site of the abbey nor the effigy of the great Norman are the attraction now. St. Victor is the nearest station to the famous Neufchatel cheese market. But all its busy aspect of to-day will fade when it shall have pleased the Western Railway authorities to connect Neufchatel with Creil and Paris on the one side, and Dieppe and the English market on the other. Here is Cleres, notable chiefly as the point whence it is proposed the Western Railway shall join the Northern Railway at Amiens. Let the reader glance for a moment at the railway map of France, and he will be convinced not only of the importance of this connecting line, but of many others necessary to the development of this most fruitful corner of France. There is no way of travelling from Rouen or Havre, or Dieppe or Fécamp, to Amiens, or Boulogne, or Calais by railway, save by passing through Paris. Granville, the great oyster-centre, which, according to M. Coste, presents at the present moment such a spectacle of productiveness, is without railway communi-

cation with any part of the empire. The nearest point of communication from the north is St. Leu, and from the south is St. Malo. I have been favoured with the opportunity of examining a map of the railway system, which, it is agreed by competent authorities, is necessary to the proper development of the riches of the Norman and Breton soils. The gentleman who showed me this map did so with a shrug of the shoulders. He said it was well-nigh impossible to stir the people. They could not or would not understand a large, general system of railway intercommunication. They were the creatures of routine, and it took many years to introduce the smallest improvement among them or to give them a little extra energy. It was indeed English energy and commercial enterprise which have pushed on railway matters in the North of France to even their present imperfect condition. We are ever pushing a field for new outlets and for fresh markets or sources of wealth. The presence of the British element, of the British spirit, is conspicuous both at Havre and Rouen. The suburbs of both the Manchester and the Liverpool of France are covered with substantial, comfortable, garden-encompassed merchants' villas of English aspect. Up the steep,

behind the Hotel de Ville at Havre, there are streets and roads so English in aspect that it is difficult for the Saxon traveller to believe that he is not wandering about the better part of St. John's-wood.

Remark, moreover, that the people of these regions are old friends and blood-relatives of ours, and that British names and the fame of English deeds of chivalry and valour, live along the Norman valleys and give interest to dozens of silent, worn-out little cities, as well as to the great local monuments. Turn where we will, in Norman vale or on Norman height, we find some landmark of the fight or treaty in which the two races were concerned; whether it be Saucy Castle, built by Richard Cœur de Lion, or the little town of Vernon, or Longueville, whence some great English families derived their names. Falaise has St. Talbot's Tower. The name of Bedford is familiar in French Manchester; and in ancient Caen the memory of poor old Brummell lingers. Hereabouts, in short, the Englishman feels himself more at home than in any other part of France. On the constant intercourse which has been kept up between the southern coast of England and the French shore, from Calais to Havre, many curious theories and historical dreams have been based.

I had the advantage, while at Dieppe, of conversing with a gentleman who had been the librarian of the town, and had devoted his learned leisure to the antiquities that lie thickly strewn about his native place. He presented me with a pamphlet he had written bearing this startling title, "London: The Daughter of a Continental Township." Basing his study on the text of Cæsar, and of the progress of the Celtic races from the east to the west, and noting that Cæsar on his landing in Kent found there a race which had come from the opposite shore—from the ancient Belgium—and had established themselves in places to which they had given the name of their old home on the Continent, he arrives at the conclusion that two little villages on the banks of the Aulne, a little way to the east of Dieppe, called Douvrend and Londinières, respectively gave their names to Dover and to London. Again, where the valley of these two places reaches the sea, is the old Cité de Limes, now called the Camp of Cæsar, and which, according to M. Féret, the enthusiastic author of the pamphlet I have before me, has given its name to Lyme Regis on the coast of Dorsetshire. He relies for the establishment of his position, not on the science of words, but on the exact relative

positions of the six places he names, on the wind which prevails generally in the British Channel, and on the text of Cæsar. While he admits that there may be a foundation of truth in the legend that the word London is derived from a great chief called Lud, he raises the hypothesis that Lud might be the name given to men who had come from Londinières. At any rate, whether we accept or reject for London the origin given to her by this Dieppe antiquary, we can see in the cordiality of his tone, and in the enthusiasm of his summing up, something of the kinsman's warmth. No inhabitant of Normandy has greater confidence in the splendour which is in store for his native province than M. Féret, who has made so many learned explorations of her ruins.

Normandy, besides being a fruitful natural garden, is extraordinarily well situated, lying exactly between the two great centres of the commerce of the world. Whenever there is a scarcity in an article of food on the British side of the Channel, our energetic provision merchants make their way to a Norman port. It is from the plenty of this part of the country, which so richly rewards even unskilled cultivation, that the great fleets of merchantmen which Havre sends forth are victualled. At this time of the year

Norman produce markets, provided from the innumerable market gardens which creep up every slope, and stretch through all the low lands, and surround every cottage, are a picture of plenty. The "omnibus" trains send forth at the market stations crowds of ruddy-faced men and women, all of whom appear to be in the best health and highest spirits. The sidings of the stations display waggon-loads of apples and swedes. On the rich slopes around Beuzeville the ploughing is in progress. The "fiery fingers" of autumn have touched the rich array of ferns in the woods and on the railway banks, and have seared the crowns of the trees, but there is plenty of green by every cottage. The leeks, and celery, and artichokes are sown in rows, straight as arrows; while on the steep cuttings of the line, everywhere covered with rich verdure, goats are quietly browsing. Nature has done nobly here; and man, we are told, not by half so much as he might have done.

A gentleman, who spoke to me with the experience of 20 years passed in Normandy, insisted that the agricultural development of Normandy and Brittany were retarded by the subdivision of property and the cutting up of land into farms of from five to ten acres,

ten acres being a large holding. On the important question of mutton he was very emphatic, and thought that, whatever England's distresses might be in consequence of the cattle plague, she would never care much to import French mutton; it was thin and tough, and tasteless. "Why," said, he "the sheep you find grazing on the hills in this neighbourhood are just the direct descendants of the sheep that were killed here in the time of the Romans. On they go, from generation to generation. Nobody thinks of crossing, and they are poor little things, as you might expect—giving you a leg of mutton of a few pounds, and this is'nt worth eating. I can't eat it. Their beef is better; in the cold weather it is very fair. But their mutton, neither in frost nor in the dog-days, is eatable. I'll tell you what I do. I get my meat from Southampton. I have it hung up on the deck."

While giving this opinion on the meat of Normandy and Brittany, my informant did not forget to add that the bad mutton was all the fault of the jog-trot, old, and poor French breeders, who were content to go on from generation to generation, making no changes, infusing no new blood into the fold. This old observer of Norman and Breton farming was, I

perceived at once, an uncompromising opponent of small farms. He gave me a graphic and somewhat humorous account of the owner of some 10 or 12 acres, who, with his wife and daughter, and son, and son's wife—a family of some six or seven—would scramble together, bit by bit, without system, the crops of their few acres. He described what he had himself seen over and over again :—"First they begin with one crop," he said; "before that is got in, the farmer will discover that the barley is ripe, and take a turn at that. Then they will get home some of the flax, and at last the rain will come and find them in utter confusion with all their little crops. And such crops! Why, here, sir, they think 18 bushels of corn to the acre very good indeed; while we, with our high farming, get 40. Surely that is waste. But they are slow to move. They mistrust every man who interferes or offers them advice. Suppose I were to go to them and to say, 'You might, with proper care and skill, get out of one acre as much corn as you now raise on two,' they would shake their dull heads, and only wonder what purpose of my own I was trying to serve in giving them this advice. They will improve, because the times will be ultimately too strong for them; but it's no use worrying

or forcing them. You are astonished at the slowness with which intercommunications are effected, with which roads are made, and with which any improvement is introduced; but, had you passed 20 years in these districts, you would agree with me that he who would bring about an improvement among these people must come with a vast fund of patience at his command. I know of many Government projects that are in hand, and it is patent to everybody who knows anything of agriculture in France that there is a desire in high places to improve the breeding stock of cattle in every part of the empire. The thing is being done, sir, only very gradually, as it must be done here.

Your English plan of debating an improvement, of settling it, and there and then carrying it out, is not the plan here. A change is of very slow growth. There can be no doubt about it. The magnificent country about Havre would produce double its actual yield under English farming; whereas Havre drains it dry; but, the beginning of a change for the better implies capital. These Norman and Breton farmers are poor. Capital has been drained from the fields, and the peasant has been left to get what he can out of the soil, and so it is a scramble. These petty

farmers have never seen got out of the land more than they can get out of it—if, indeed, so much. Generation after generation comes and goes, and the sons are copies of their fathers in all things."

This experience of a twenty years' observer seems to point to the conclusion that for very many years to come the most fertile parts of France are not likely to be much better cultivated than they are at the present moment; and that whenever the dearness of meat in the English market shall tempt dealers to look to France for an extra supply, we shall again see Scotch cattle-dealers make their appearance in the Norman ports, and go trudging on their way through Brittany to collect a drove of cattle, almost head by head, from the poor ten-acre farmers.

The canny Scotchmen were on the alert last year, and passed through Havre or Dieppe, *en route* for Brittany, and in quest of the small Breton cattle. The Thursday market at Poissy* had special attractions for them. They literally forced themselves into

* Aix, in Provence, is the largest cattle market in France, with the exception of Poissy, which supplies Paris. At Aix the average weekly supply is 600 to 700 oxen, and 9,000 to 10,000 sheep. The price of beef (February, 1866) is 5d. per lb., and mutton 6d. The retail prices are 7d. and 8d.

the French markets; and were not daunted by puzzling restrictions and regulations, nor by the long journeys they had to make among the scattered herds of Brittany. Under the fiery heat of the summer sun they patiently collected their drove, and directed it upon their port of embarkation.

I have already given the reader a list of the exportations of cattle from Dieppe to Newhaven, and I am now enabled, through the courtesy of Her Majesty's Consul at Havre, to add the exports from Honfleur, from June 18th to October 20th, 1865. During these four months, steamers carried from Honfleur to Littlehampton 796 bullocks, 552 sheep, and 800 pigs; in all, 2,148 head of live stock. By the steam route from Honfleur to Southampton were carried 1,947 bullocks, 12 sheep, and 198 pigs; in all, 2,157 animals. The export, then, of live stock from Honfleur to England has been 4,305 head of cattle. Taking the cattle export *viâ* Dieppe at the rate I have already given, we may safely reckon that the cattle exports from the Norman ports to England during June, July, September and October, 1865 reached to 6,000 head. This important exportation of animal food from the north-west provinces of France, is surely of sufficient importance to awaken

men on the English as well as the French side of the Channel to the necessity of cultivating a trade which, in an uncultivated and disordered state, shows such excellent results. It is the Englishmen settled at Havre, or Dieppe, or at one of the Norman towns, who are watching the ever-increasing provision trade which is being carried on between Normandy and our southern ports. It is these men who insist upon the great future that is in store for the north-west provinces of France, when all their lines of communication shall have been thoroughly opened up, and when the farmers of Normandy and Brittany shall have the light to see the advantage of fully cultivating their land, and of intelligently crossing the breeds of their cattle. Then will a steady trade be kept up, and not a fitful one like the present. Supplies for the British market will be deliberately grown and regularly forwarded, and we shall not have mere hap-hazard importations of perhaps a thousand baskets of fruit from time to time. Before a great and steady provision trade can come, many alterations in the vexatious rules and official intermeddling which now afflict French trade must have ceased to exist. A vast length of what we in England call red tape, but which must be here called green tape, has to be gathered up and thrown away.

Suppose some unmistakable symptoms of the cattle plague were to be officially detected in some corner of this department of the Lower Seine, the official could utter no word of warning to the public. He must report to his superior, who will report to the sous-prefect, who will again report to the prefect —the prefect being, in his turn, bound to report to the minister, in Paris. No fact is to be got at directly, or within reasonable time. It must be filtered through sous-prefects', and prefects', and ministers' offices, and must travel through the same circuitous route back. A little time since it was reported that some French cattle, which had been landed at Newhaven from France, had shown unmistakable signs of the cattle plague. The case was one which naturally created very great anxiety among all who were interested in the trade between France and England. It was of great moment that the truth of the report should be fully and rapidly tested, and that English importers and the English public generally should know on official authority whether the plague had broken out in those provinces from which we were importing live stock. The delays inseparable from the French centralisation of authority over the most petty details afforded

us a fine example of the harm it is capable of doing to commerce. It will be satisfactory, in this instance, however, to the reader to learn (and I have the fact from the highest authority) that down to the 20th of October, 1865, not a single case of disease among cattle had been discovered throughout the department of the Lower Seine. It ultimately turned out that the cattle which had been reported as afflicted with the disease, were only worn out, having been driven through the broiling heat of the summer from the farms on which they were bred to the port of embarkation.

The French are so methodical a race that they must go through a number of forms before they undertake even an improvement, the value of which has been completely made manifest to their understanding. Contrast an English with a French railway station, for instance. In the French station the ceremony of getting your ticket, and then of waiting your turn to have your luggage registered, is painfully elaborate. It is as elaborate when you are travelling a distance of only 10 miles as when you are booking from Paris to Marseilles. I went one day from this city to Fécamp, something over an hour's journey. My portmanteau was duly regis-

tered after much waiting at Havre till my turn came. It is not without reason you are warned in the railway guide to be at the station a quarter of an hour before the time appointed for leaving. But this was not the worst part of the journey, nor was the slack speed. Arrived at Fécamp, where I intended to pass only a short time, I was, as usual, ushered into the *salle d'attente* to wait for my portmanteau. The hours and hours that, in the course of my French experience of travelling, I have waited for that same portmanteau! English travellers begin with wondering why there is this delay of half an hour, during which they are huddled among a crowd of dusty, irritated passengers, in a dismal *salle*. Our neighbours are revelling on the platform, and behind the long, low counters in the regions beyond the firmly-closed doors they are gently and blandly going through all the delightful forms which they deem proper with a traveller's luggage. He will find it presently, when the officials have come to the conclusion that they are quite ready to receive him, arranged in exquisite order along a series of low counters, with the boxes and bags of his fellow-travellers. The luggage is divided and sub-divided, raised in pyramids under one placard, or strewn along in open file under ano-

ther. There is plenty of time. This is the lesson the French railway official teaches you. Even when you have no luggage, you are his prisoner. Directly you have paid for your ticket he pens you in a first, second, or third class waiting-room, and keeps you there, with your nose against the window, until it shall please him to admit you to the platform. You are cut off from your friends. They cannot see you off should you be going to the Antipodes. This is all very orderly, but it is very slow and rigid; quite unlike the starting of the express mail from Euston-square or King's-cross, with its crowds of passengers and mounds of luggage, all whipped as by magic into their proper vans and places, without trouble to the traveller, or the least imposition of drill upon him. This is the kind of difference that exists between the conduct of trade in England and the slow and needless forms and ceremonies which burden it in France. As another instance, take the complications of the French post-office, where the posting of a newspaper is a matter of very nice calculation, and where it is weighed up to a centime's worth of carriage. You take a *Grand Journal*, for instance, into a bureau de poste (you must not drop it into the box outside), and ask a gentleman behind the pigeon-hole what the

postage on it is to London. After carefully noting the number of grammes it weighs, he will probably say 16 cents, being 3 sous and 1 centime. Now, this sum cannot be expressed, according to French postal regulations, with less than three postage stamps, namely, a 10 cent one, and a 4 cent one, and a 2 cent one. Your change out of the 4 sous which you tender, moreover, cannot be given to you in money, since centimes in coin are rare. The clerk, therefore, hands you four one centime stamps, making seven stamps necessary to the posting of one paper. A few days since, having posted a newspaper in a little market town, the clerk, a confused country boy, having managed to collect exactly 16 cents' worth of stamps, and put them on the paper, found himself quite unable to give me my proper change out of four sous. At last the lad said, "Monsieur, I must give you back one sou, and put up with the loss of one centime out of my pocket." I objected to this solution of the difficulty, and was constrained to make a present of four centimes to the imperial treasury. I went away, puzzling my head, I confess, over the whole affair, and wondering how that poor lad, and hundreds like him, could keep such infinitesimal transactions clear and straight to the centime. Let

the reader imagine for a moment postage stamps for the tenth of a penny, for two-tenths of a penny, for four-tenths of a penny, and our postmaster set to work to weigh the grains of a newspaper, and to use no less than seven stamps in accomplishing the postage of one copy of this journal.

Let them imagine this kind of petty dealing carried into every department of commerce, into the manufactory, and into the farm; they will get a not unjust idea of the spirit in which much of the trade of France is transacted, and they will comprehend why it is that we, who take the initiative in the establishment of new trades, go straight to our end, while the Frenchman tarries at every point with his slate in his hand, scratching his head wistfully over the centimes for which he cannot account. But because he is not so quick or adventurous as we are, he is not stationary like the Chinaman. He is ever moving, wrapt up in his forms though he be.

If the sheep now grazing on the hills round about Havre, or in the meadows that peep out of the water seven miles off on the opposite bank of the Seine to that from which I am writing, be the degenerate descendants of the flocks that gave meat to the Romans—and my experience of the Norman mutton

leads me to the belief that they are—let us not run away with the idea that the French Government have done little towards improving the breed of cattle. Those Englishmen who went over the International Cattle Show held in 1855, where the French exhibited a thousand head of native breeds, know that the Imperial Government has done much already. The regional competitive exhibitions (agricultural France being divided into 12 regions) of cattle have excited emulation among the breeders in various departments, and have been on the whole great successes. The attention of scientific men and of agricultural authorities, as well as of the richer class of farmers, is being led to the study of the races which contribute to the food of man. French agricultural authorities, like M. Delavergne and M. Baudemont, have unreservedly admitted that there is no beef-yielding animal that can compare with our Durham short-shorns. This race is gradually spreading in France. It may be remembered that the Marquis de Talhouet, an intelligent agriculturist, of the department of the Sarthe, was the purchaser of the bull that obtained the first prize in 1855. The national breeding establishments of Pia and Caen have splendid samples of the Durham breed. Such scientific farmers as the Marquis de

Torcy of the Orne, and M. de Béhague of the department of Loiret, are finding imitators where a few years ago they found opponents who would not admit the superiority of our short-horns over their indigenous bovine race. It seems that the departments of La Mayenne and Maine-et-Loire have led the way in agricultural improvements. But, by the help of the Government establishments and a few leading agriculturists, our Durham breed is being gradually spread, and crossed with various native breeds, as the Charolais, the Norman, and the Loraine and Breton races; and Anjou bids fair to be to France what the North Riding is to England. Our Herefords and Devons have made little way; but our Ayrshires have made extraordinary progress in ten years, for their milk and the superior quality of their flesh. If the little Breton can flourish as well as the native of Ayrshire, on poor pasture, the meat of the latter is infinitely better than that of the Breton animal. These two English races, then, are those which our neighbours have adopted for the improvement of their native bovine breeds:—the huge cows of Holland (which are described as yielding mountains of flesh and floods of milk) having apparently failed where their introduction has been attempted. Of the French

races, that of Normandy appears to be beyond all comparison the most valuable. It is this race which usually provides the Parisians with *bœuf-gras*. The Charolais breed was, however, triumphant this year. It is to the Norman race that Paris is chiefly indebted for beef and butter. Some of these Norman oxen, which have been paraded through Paris streets ornamented with ribbons, have weighed 2000 kilogrammes. There are two varieties—the large and the small; the large being that grown for the butchers, the small being the best milk-yielders. But neither the small nor the large have all the qualities which make the excellence of the Durham ox and the Ayrshire cow. The large Norman oxen are too bony, and the little Norman cows do not yield so abundantly as our Scotch breed. Cross-breeds of these varieties, however, have already produced the most satisfactory results. "But, whether pure or crossed," observes M. L. Delavergne, "the Norman race is the best and most profitable race we have, and will remain so." He calculates that Normandy ought to produce annually 100,000 fat oxen, or one-quarter of the meat which is annually consumed in France. Half this quantity goes to Paris, and the other half is spread over the five departments of which Normandy con-

sists. In Normandy there are half-a-million of cows; so that this ancient province includes one-tenth of the cattle of the empire. Moreover, Normandy sends forth cattle to the adjacent departments round Paris. This race, called the "Cotentine," is estimated at between 3,000 and 4,000 head.

M. N. de Lavalette in a criticism on the exhibition of fat cattle, held at Nevers, in January, 1865, dwells on the great qualities of the Charolais breed. This exhibition of fat cattle was a novelty in the department where it was held. It was a great success. A few enlightened agriculturists, headed by the Comte de Bouillé, stirred up the landlords and farmers of the Nièvre, and opened a subscription to defray the expenses of the exhibition, which being limited to 20f. from each individual, brought forward the poor as well as the rich. When the milk-white Charolais oxen—the cows and the cross-breeds of Dishleys and Southdown—were ranged in the corn-market of Nevers, crowds of country people flocked thither from neighbouring departments. On the day when the prizes were distributed, the crowd was immense, and the eagerness was great to see the Charolais or Nivernais beasts, whom M. de Lavalette prefers, "on many accounts," to our famous Dur-

hams. M. de Lavalette dwelt with enthusiasm on the beasts he saw at this Nevers exhibition, and particularly on the oxen for the yoke, which he contends albeit big-boned and full of muscle, would fatten easily for the butcher. He asks whether the over-praised English races can be made to combine these two uses. For himself he doubts it, and holds that in a few years, the Charolais race will be first among the French races of oxen, as a race for the yoke and the butcher.

A few words on the difference between Charolais and Nivernais oxen. The former are the pure race carefully preserved and bred. The Nivernais are a cross-breed of the Charolais and our own Durhams. M. de Lavalette states that the crossing has given now and then pretty good results in the way of elegance of form, smallness of head and horns, and fineness of head and hide. In short, the Nivernais have an air of "distinction" which makes them favourites at exhibitions. M. de Lavalette, however, appeals to "serious men" to consider whether it is not better to have a care of the pure Charolais breed, and to maintain it as being stronger in the yoke and yielding cheaper meat than the more elegant Nivernais or Charolais Durham. He remarks, in sup-

port of his opinion,—"The Charolais cattle-breeders generally sell their oxen to the beet-root sugar growers of the north, who sell their oxen at very high prices. Now these men of the north require from the beasts which they buy in the Nièvre, the Morvan, the Alliers, and the Cher, both labour and meat. The oxen must do the labour of the farm, and of the sugar factory. When the work is at an end they are fattened at a cheap rate. They have already produced a profit by their labour. This profit goes towards the process of fattening, which takes from ninety to a hundred days. Formerly, our sugar growers worked with horses. We congratulate them on having discovered that they could do better with good oxen. Well, it is not to be feared that the infusion of too much Durham blood in our Charolais breed will produce a lymphatic temperament, and lesson the animal's power of work. I submit this important question to breeders, and recommend them to use Durham blood with great reserve. Thus our fine Charolais race will retain its distinguishing characteristics which are admired by all who know them; I may add, by the English themselves." Nearly all the oxen exhibited at Nevers, however, were of the mixed Charolais and

Durham breed. M. de Lavalette quarrels with the jury for having awarded the prizes to some perfectly formed beasts, at the expense of others that had more solid qualities, and that would make meat more rapidly and at a cheaper rate. He says they were too much influenced by ideas of the *Bœuf de Carnaval!*—a "privilege" that the Charolais need not envy Normandy. There were only five pens of sheep at the Nevers exhibition; the finest being some Southdown Berrichons, from the flocks of the Comte de Bouillé. The Dishley—Metis and Berrichons—Oxfordshire—Down (whatever these may be) were, according to M. de Lavalette, very poor indeed. Next year, I am told, all the central departments will have a great exhibition of fat cattle—an exhibition some of our agriculturists would do well to visit.

The French are very proud of their Flemish race—of those fine herds which are the chief riches of French Flanders. In this province they abound, and flourish in the midst of finely-cultivated lands. The five departments of French Flanders and of Picardy contain 500,000 of these fine Flemish cows. There are 200,000 in the department of the Nord alone. In the arrondissement of Lille it is estimated that there is one cow to every hectare of land,

and that each of these cows is herself the support of a family. It is from these and the Cotentine cows, that Paris is mainly supplied with milk. But, if we want to see an extraordinary number of heads of the bovine race, we must repair to the Breton peninsula. It is true that a Breton beast is not more than half the size or weight of a Norman or an English ox; but of this little race there are a million and a half head. Their value has only been fairly appreciated of late years. They had proved their capacity for living and yielding abundance of milk on poor pasturage; but they have shown of late that they will fatten rapidly and richly on good pasturage, and yield a most delectable quality of beef. Moroover, Durham-Bretons and Ayrshire-Bretons have been great successes.

The consequence of the discovery of these qualities in the little Breton cow, has been that its price has doubled in its native place. Glancing south from Brittany, we find the Chollet and the Parthenay races flourishing in La Vendée, where the austere Trappists devote themselves with marked success to cattle-breeding. These races are not crossed. The proud Vendeans will not have the purity of their race sullied. These animals are workers as well as

meat-growers. I have now briefly touched upon the races and the departments which furnish the best breeds and the best meat to be had in France, which are the grazing districts *par excellence*, and where the bovine race is seldom put to labour. This north-west region, in short, supplies half the milk and half the meat consumed in France. The races of the south are in all respects inferior. To the east there is the Charolais—a fine race, which has of late years been bred specially for its beef, and kept from the yoke. It is said that, when kept from labour and well fed, the Charolais comes nearest among French breeds to the Durham. The annual yield of fat Charolais oxen is now more than 50,000 head. The central region of France—Auvergne, the mountainous Limousin region, the department of Puy-de-Dôme, of Cantal, and of the Upper Loire—shows throughout neglected agricultural waste lands and poor live stock. The want of roads and railways appears to be the chief cause of this waste. This region is in the hands of masses of the poorest proprietors. It is a dismal contrast to Picardy and Normandy, and Flanders and Brittany. The poor Auvergnats depend almost exclusively upon their cattle. They have no highways to great

markets. Auvergnât cattle are bred on the volcanic mountains. They are eminently adaptable creatures. They supply labour, milk, and meat. The milk is richly caseous. The Auvergnât's plan is this: He keeps his cows, sells his bull calves, makes cheese, which he sells with the milk; and he rears beasts, which he sells in the neighbouring provinces to be yoked to the plough. When these oxen have worked their seven or eight years, they are sent farther on their travels west, to the nourishing plains by the sea, where they are fattened for the butcher. The Limousin oxen, which are usually overworked and underfed, are fattened, when they are destined for market, on the generous pasturages of La Vendée or Normandy. In the departments of the Haute-Vienne, La Creuse, and Corréze, agriculture is slowly, very slowly, progressing; and the hope of its future prosperity lies in the increasing demand which Paris is making for Limousin beef. In the twenty departments of the south, there are but 1,500,000 of the bovine race, and these are beasts of burden; for the people of these regions—the citizens, for instance, of Toulouse and Bayonne—care little about beef, and are very small consumers of milk. Their milk is wine. Again, they use very little butter in their

cookery. They eat, for animal food, large quantities of poultry, which can be easily and abundantly reared; and the cultivation of which is so generally and foolishly neglected in our northern regions. Their meats are mutton, bacon; but of animal food they take, because they require, less than is necessary to an inhabitant of the north. Some ten years ago beef was not worth more at Toulouse, or at Bayonne, than something between 3d. and 4d. per lb.; so that the cattle-breeder, to produce meat for those markets with a profit, must have grown beef at about 2½d. per lb. In such districts, where, moreover, the pasturage is poor, it is not surprising that little attention should be given the oxen, except as beasts of burden. In this character the oxen of the Landes and the Bearnais are admirable, as every traveller will bear witness who has seen them in their dainty nets and fanciful harness, drawing carts laden with corn, and gently and affectionately following the wand of the dignified Basque peasant. This Basque peasant has not the least desire for the beef, which is the choice morsel and the *fête* day meal of the ruddy labourer, who tills the moist and rich soil of Normandy.

CHAPTER V.

HAVRE AND THEREABOUTS.

While our neighbours have not neglected altogether the lessons of our experience in the breeds of the bovine race, they have also paid some attention to our Southdowns, and Dishleys, and Cotswolds. At the National Sheep-Breeding Establishment of Mont Cavrel, in the Pas de Calais, there is an annual sale of French descendants of our best breeds. They are gradually spreading, especially over the northern districts of France. They are bred with great care;—for instance, at the Agricultural Penitentiary of Petit Bourg. The French are, moreover, very proud of their own merino race, reared from the great parent establishment of Rambouillet, which has been in existence nearly a century. This fine and profitable race is to be seen in great numbers just south of Paris, on the plains of La Beauce. There are

4,000,000 head of it in five departments; namely, the Seine et-Marne, Seine-et-Loire, Aisne, Oise, and Eure-et-Loire. This race, it should be remembered, is grown chiefly for its fine wool, which rivals that of the famous Spanish merinos. No mutton, it may be fearlessly said, grown in France, can be compared with our Southdown, our Welsh, and that of the Malvern hills. Paris *gourmets* boast of their Prèsalé,—very small mutton, indeed, fed on the salt pasturages by the western coast; but I don't think any Englishman ever found the least fine flavour in it. A leg of it weighs 4lb. or 5lb. It is as tasteless, and almost as white as veal; and, indeed, about Havre and other Anglo-French places, is sold as lamb. The reason why the mutton of Paris—it may be said of France—is so poor is, that it is the flesh of old merino sheep who have been doing duty as wool-growers. Many French agriculturists are making experiments in cross-breeds with our Dishleys. Troops of Norman and Flemish Dishleys are to be seen. The struggle is to create a race that shall grow excellent meat as well as fine wool. Then there is the Charmoise race, which originated in the department of Loire-et-Cher, and which is spreading much in the central departments. This precocious

race, a cross between the Berrichon and our Southdown, is fully grown at fourteen months, and has frequently gained the prize for fat sheep at Poissy. French pigs cannot bear comparison in one particular with our Hampshire, Essex, new Leicester, or Sussex breeds, and the intelligent French breeders acknowledge this. They do not advocate even a cross-breed, but the introduction of our pure breeds into their farms. Some of the leading French agriculturists have already obtained prizes for their naturalised English porcine races.

Let me now offer a few observations on the goats which, in some districts, the French turn to such wonderfully profitable acccount. The milch sheep of Rouergue are a highly profitable race. Let the *gourmet* remember with gratitude that it is to the milch sheep of Roquefort, in Aveyron, he is indebted for the famous cheese, which is the nearest French approach to our Stilton. The she-goat, some French authorities insist, is the most productive domestic animal a poor man can take into his possession. The goat, if well fed, will give 600 litres of milk per annum—more than an ordinary French cow will give, albeit the cow will consume very much more food than the goat. It is estimated

that the goats of the Mont d'Or, near Lyons, are worth £5 a head annually to their proprietor. Their hair and skin are of great value, and the cheese made from their milk is far beyond that made from cows' milk in delicacy of flavour, and consequently in money value. The French understand the value of the goat better than our agricultural labouring population.

This is why I have noticed them so often browsing even along the well-covered railway embankments. It is said that they are destructive, which is true enough, but then, here they are not allowed to indulge their destructive propensities, since they are tethered, or enclosed where they can do no harm, and where all they consume will return to their owners in most profitable produce. Rabbits, again, are made profitable, although there is no system or activity in this part of the country like that which supplies the great rabbit market of Ostend. Many of your readers will remember the celebrated treatise, namely, "The Art of Making an Income of 3,000f. a year by Rabbit-breeding;" the treatise of a most sanguine calculator. Without going his length, the breeding of rabbits may be recommended among the agricultural poor as a means, which they now neglect, of providing themselves with good animal food.

After peeping into many poultry-yards, and ranging over not a few poultry markets, I have come to the conclusion that the poultry hereabouts will not often bear comparison for size or weight with ours. I know that many French agricultural authorities will not have this to be so; that they believe their fowls, and ducks, and geese, and turkeys, and pheasants, and pigeons, and guinea fowl to be superior to that of any other country in the world.

"Nothing in the world can come up to our poultry," enthusiastically cries M. L. Delavergne. The value of French poultry and eggs has been set down confidently at eight millions sterling annually. The consumption is vast. The annual exportation of eggs is to the value of nearly one million sterling. This is wonderful wealth got out of the poultry-yard. The French poultry-yards include fine breeds, as the Crêvecoeurs, and those of Mons and Barbezieux. We import, it is true, from Languedoc those fine Toulouse geese which are seen in our markets. The turkeys and guinea-fowl are generally the great ornament of the French poultry-yard. I have come across some fine breeds of ducks by the streams along these Norman valleys. Conceding the French verdict on our Dorkings—namely, that they are not

worth the Crêvecoeurs—I cannot honestly agree with them, that their poultry surpasses that of the rest of the world. It is notorious to travellers, that their average poultry is poor, and small, and flavourless. The skeletons which figure at the cheaper *tables d'hôtes* in town and country could nowhere be matched in England. The lean and long-legged fowls of no breed whatever, which I have seen by thousands during the last few weeks, are the offspring of the poor birds that do duty for poultry at the hotels of Hâvre, and Fécamp, and Dieppe, and Rouen. The geese and turkeys are fine, and plump, and well-grown. But I have failed to notice the least care as to breed among the fowls of any of the Norman villages. I make an exception in favour of the old military custodian of the castle ruins at Arques. He had two or three fine breeds, and was not quite of M. Delavergne's opinion as to the complete supremacy of the French poultry-yard; for he, if I remember rightly, had some fine Dorkings, and certainly some exquisite bantams in his collection. It is only at rare intervals, and at very rare intervals, that the traveller comes across a fine breed of fowls in a French poultry-yard. The rule is long-legged, lean, nondescript birds. They are strong numerically, but

individually *disgracieux*. Seeing the great commercial results which the French have obtained, even with their poultry-yards as they are, before they have paid much attention to breeds or to poultry economy, or to poultry farming on a large scale; our active demand on their Norman coast must lead them by degrees either to cultivate carefully their best native breeds, as their Crêvecoeurs, or to reconsider their decision, that French poultry have nothing to gain by cross-breeding, even with the finest stocks of British yards.

Their leading men have already taken note of the English and American systems of agriculture, which produce enormous quantities of the first necessities of life, of bread and meat, as the best bases of material prosperity. The French grow a little bit of everything, and send to a local agricultural exhibition an extraordinary variety of vegetables and fruit, and colza, and maize, and wine; while the English farmer will be content to exhibit some few handfuls of wheat, and oats, and barley. The Frenchman makes up the more picturesque stall, but the Englishman shows the best commercial result. In the same way with the Americans. Their farm products are few, but the prime necessaries are in enormous quantities. They

count their pigs, for instance, by the million. The French have some very great farms, it is true, as that of M. de Lisse, which included 2,500 acres of beet-root, and 1,000 head of cattle. The manure of these raised him 10,000 hectolitres of corn. In another department at Bresles, a company with a capital of £32,000 has gone largely into beet-root cultivation and the fattening of cattle. As long back as ten years ago this company was flourishing and returning 15 per cent. to its shareholders.

The most notable and most hopeful change, however, that has come over the enlightened and experimental French agriculturist's dream since his distresses of 1848, has been, in his opinion, on the subject of free trade in corn and cattle. He has, in the first place, been watching narrowly the result of free trade in corn in England; at the same time he has been a student of our high farming, and has recognised us as the greatest cattle-producing farmers in the world. He has applied our logic to his own case. He has said to himself that the foundation of the agricultural edifice reposes on the backs of cattle. Cattle furnish the most valuable food, and milk, and wool, and hides, and manure. It is by them that a farmer is enabled to get crops of corn off his land. It may

be said that that country is the most powerful where cattle most abound. The cattle riches of France have been doubled during the last half century, but they remain far inferior to this description of wealth in England. Under the Government of July, and also under the Restoration, the French public and their representatives, the French Chambers, had a most irrational horror of the introduction of foreign cattle into France. Did not Père Bugeaud exclaim that he feared the invasion of cattle more than the invasion of the Cossacks? Before the Restoration the duty on the importation of foreign cattle was low. A trade in cattle had opened up—chiefly on the Swiss and German frontiers. It seems to have prospered to the extent of some 20,000 oxen, 250,000 sheep, and 80,000 pigs, in 1821. In the following year the French Chambers, in their enlightened desire to keep up high prices on all agricultural produce, passed a law imposing an importation duty of £2 a head on foreign oxen. This tax was deemed a prohibitory one. Its effect was to have been to keep up prices. But it had no effect whatever on these prices, inasmuch as the importation had been too small under the old *régime* to influence the general prices of the French cattle market. The German and Swiss importations

had been only a little local trading. Under the new tariff this petty commerce flagged, but still some importations were kept up. During the thirty years it was in force, it decreased the importation of foreign cattle to the extent of 270,000 head per annum. Of course this trifling difference could have neither good nor bad effect on the great cattle markets of France. In the same year, when the old prohibitory tax of the Restoration was swept away, the absurd predictions which had been indulged in as to the reduced prices of meat were not realised. By the imperial decree of the 14th September, 1853 (when the prices of meat had alarmingly increased), the duty on the importation of cattle per head was reduced to 3f. for oxen, 1f. for cows, and 25c. for sheep. At the same time the import duties on wool were greatly reduced, so that it may be said that since that time the farmers of France have not been protected against foreign importations.

Many readers must remember the outcry that was made twelve years ago in the formidable ranks of French Protectionists, when it was said to them that one of their own commissioners had proved to them that neither in Belgium, nor Germany, nor in the east of Europe did cattle exist in quantities that could overwhelm in "a disastrous competition" the cattle-

breeders of Picardy, and Normandy, and Brittany, and Anjou. They retorted that the American continent, then, would bring ruin upon the French farmer. They described the millions of wild cattle of the Pampas of Buenos Ayres, and the millions of American pigs that were to be salted down and sent in infinite quantities into the French markets. From Hungary and Poland enormous quantities of meat in the carcase were to be directed upon the frontiers of the empire; for the decree which had reduced the duties upon the importation of live stock had also admitted fresh and salted foreign meats at nominal rates. The reduction of duties both on live and dead stock naturally increased the importation of both, but to no extent that could sensibly affect the general price of meat in the great central markets. Two years after the decree had taken force the importation of dead stock was estimated at the rate of four ounces yearly for every French subject. In 1864 the total value of dead stock imported did not exceed £450,000, while that of the live stock was £1,325,000, making the total meat importations of the empire for last year £1,775,000. In the same year, the French importations of cereals were only £2,080,000. These figures are complete answers to the alarmists of 1853.

The bread and meat markets of France have now

been open twelve years to foreign competition, and here is the result—the truth being that there is no country, the produce of which is so greatly in excess of its wants, that it can afford to undersell the French farmer on a large scale in his own market place. On the contrary, as French agricultural economists are beginning to see, there is no reason why France, especially the north of France, with which I am more particularly dealing, should not, by improved cattle-breeding and materials of agriculture, be able to find a most profitable market in England for cattle, poultry, fruits, &c. Free trade having satisfied the French agriculturist that he may invest to any extent in live stock without the least fear of competition from any quarter; that a remunerative price will always be within his reach, he may now take courage, and raise the cattle-breeding in France, both in extent and quality, to the level of that in England. There is every reason why Normandy and Brittany, Picardy and French Flanders, should be densely stocked with the finest breeds of cattle, since they lie between the greatest meat markets in the world. But before this can happen—it is the old story—capital must be attracted to the soil.

It is not possible, for instance, on the *metayer* sys-

tem of farming, where a poor family of settlers take a certain number of hectares of land, and get what they can from it, halving the produce with the proprietor. The settler, or *metayer*, keeps a couple of cows and a few wretched sheep. His half of the flax makes the linen for his family, and he sells his few calves and sheep, and his old cattle. They are so much profit to him, for they have cost him nothing regarded as meat. The sheep have kept up a wretched existence on his fallow lands; his cows have given him milk, and have done the farm work. The farming of this wasteful description may go on for ever in the hands of men without capital, neither improving nor deteriorating. But as prices rise the poor *metayer* must disappear. An agricultural capitalist appears, bringing with him all the scientific improvements. He turns the farm into a manufactory of corn and beef. He understands the rotation of crops, manures, and breeds. In short, he quadruples the produce of the farm from which the poor *metayer* could just scrape food enough for his family, and linen enough to cover their backs. An addition is made to the human food stock; and so long as the demand for beef and corn is sharp enough to give the corn and beef producer a remunerative price, he will continue

to put money in his land and in his cattle-sheds. He has been much on the alert of late years, while the price of meat has been continuously on the increase.

In 1859 the number of cattle which were entered for prizes at the regional competitions was 4,304. In the following year, 6,289 head were entered; 7,155 in the following year; and last year the number reached 7,789, or almost double that of 1859. Within the same period the number of agricultural machines entered increased from 1,642 to 2,911. In summing up the reasons why the French farmer should resolutely enter on the path of improvement, both in cattle breeding and in corn growing, M. L. Delavergne, who is one of the most liberal writers on French agriculture whom France possesses, dwells as his crowning argument on the neighbourhood of the English market. England has opened her gates now and for ever to receive the cattle the whole world may send her. Meat is dearer in France than in England, although England produces more than France, for the simple reason that Englishmen are great meat consumers. What has the French cattle breeder, then, to fear? Meat, like any other produce or merchandise, will go where the highest price is paid for it. The cattle of Holstein, of Mecklenburg, and of

Holland are grown for the British, and not for the French market. M. Delavergne beseeches his countrymen to enter into competition with Holstein, Mecklenburg, and Holland; to turn their great grazing lands of the north to the fullest account; and to make their appearance in the markets of perfidious Albion with their Norman and Breton Durhams. Both this Norman and Breton invasion will be welcome. Nay, while France is exporting cattle in the north, she may also be importing it in the south. It is a mere question of the neighbourhood of markets. For instance, in 1856 France imported 49,000 oxen and 300,000 sheep; and in the same year exported 12,000 of the former and 50,000 of the latter. So that at one point her price was higher, while at the other it was lower, than in the neighbouring foreign market. In 1854 she imported cattle and exported none, according to the official tables. On the other hand, she exported more cereal produce than she imported; while her exports of every other variety of food were largely in her favour; and this after all the sombre forebodings of the Protectionists who saw her sliding scale fall to the ground in 1861. Surely this result shows that the less the *Moniteur* appears in the market-place the better. Our free trade example has, by

its splendid successes, compelled reciprocity. The French see this; and that even if the free trade in corn should lower the price of French corn in the south, free trade in wine will give them a rich compensation. The Government of the Emperor has been more enlightened than that of any of his predecessors in reducing duties, in setting up agricultural schools and breeding establishments—in encouraging, in short, every kind of agricultural improvement. In January, 1855, to take an instance, the duty foolishly levied on guano imported in foreign ships was reduced by one-half.

But it is the official meddling, the inveterate habit of wanting documents, designs, and certificates without number, which is the impediment in the way of free commerce, and has yet to receive its death-blow. There are instances where manufacturers of foreign agricultural machinery have absolutely refused to execute French orders, on the ground that the French Customhouse exacted so many petty forms and ceremonies, certificates of origin, &c. These papers are necessary to the life of official France, and are the consolation, I have no doubt, of the discomfited Protectionists, who have watched the imperial legislation of late years, and have been impotent to

stop it. I should note, as evidence of the liberal proclivities of Normandy, that it was a Norman deputy of one of the richest provinces of Normandy—viz., M. de Kergorlay—who alone spoke in favour of free trade during the debate of the Corps Législatif in 1856. The agricultural body was even then, Protectionist to the backbone. Only four years previously the Council-General of Agriculture and Commerce had voted almost unanimously for protection —that is, for the principle of protection—assenting at the same time most ridiculously to petty applications of free trade, as to the import of cattle, &c.

The *octroi* system, which dates back to the fourteenth century, was originally established to provide the local or municipal expenses of towns. It is said that Compiégne was the first town that obtained the royal authority to levy duties on provisions brought into it, on the condition that one quarter of the revenue thus obtained should be handed over to the public treasury. The royal masters of France were not slow in perceiving that by this *octroi* system they could easily secure large revenues to themselves. In 1663 the King issued a decree, by which he boldly took half the sums produced by the *octrois*. After being suppressed in the Revolution, and again re-

established, *octroi* offices have been now firmly planted in every part of France. They are under municipal control, and the Government takes one-tenth of the net produce. These custom houses, which are at every entrance to every town, are the despair of Frenchmen. At ports and in provincial towns, very few men can speak of the *octroi* with patience. Every market cart is searched by the *octroi* officers. The man who has a cartload of mixed merchandise, has to unload it and spread it about on the road-side, and lay bare every little box of soap or candles to the municipal tax-gatherers. The *octroi* officer pokes his *kepi* into every private carriage that passes within the town gates, and has the right to lift the cushions and look under the seats. He is particular, inasmuch as the *octroi* duties are payable upon all articles of consumption. Take this great city of Havre, with its 60,000 to 70,000 inhabitants, and its vast sailor population; this Liverpool of France, where ships of all countries are victualled for long voyages, and to which, as I have already observed, the farmers for many miles round carry their produce. It has an *octroi cordon* about it that must act as a bowstring. The municipality and the Government raise a tax at the gates, on every neces-

sary of life. I have the *octroi* tariff for the town of Havre, as approved by a decree dated the 21st of July, 1862. A few of the articles taxed at the gates of Havre, and the extent of this taxation, will give the reader an idea of the pressure the *octroi* exercises on the food markets of French provincial towns. Wine in cask or in bottle, pays 3f. 60c. per hectolitre, and pure alcohol 16f. One sou per litre is raised on lemonade and other gaseous waters. Beers pay 3f. 30c. per hectolitre. Toilet soaps, cosmetics and pomatums, aromatic vinegars, and scents pay 25f. per 100 kilogrammes. Oxen are taxed to the extent of 3f. 20c. for every 100 kilogrammes they weigh; and so are calves, and sheep, and goats. Pork pays 4f. 80c. per 100 kilogrammes, and sucking pigs 6f. The tariff is most ingenious and far-seeing. Thus fresh meat prepared for the butcher's shop, killed outside the town, pays 5f. 80c. per 100 kilogrammes on its entrance, while fresh pork pays 6f. The French mind delights in details; and, in an *octroi* tariff, it revels. It takes note even of the varieties of sausages, and, under the head of *charcuterie*, distinguishes the black pudding from the white. All *charcuterie* pays 7f. per 100 kilogrammes at the gates of the city of Havre; and so do fats of all kinds, which

are *bon à manger*. Salt or cured fish pays 5f. 60c. per 100 kilogrammes; while on every franc's worth of fish sold in the public market-place of the city, the *octroi* takes four centimes. It is impossible to escape the *octroi* officer, or to evade the fineness of his distinctions. Let the dealer put mackerel or herrings in oil or vinegar, thereby giving them a flavour acceptable to the *gourmet*, and he is straightway called upon by the *octroi* to pay three sous per kilogramme of the dainty. The rarer kinds of fish, as salmon, turbot, trout, including (the searching *octroi* tariff says) the shrimp, *dit salicoque*, or prawn, pays 75 centimes per kilogramme, including the weight of the packing. Havre oysters are taxed 15 centimes per 100, while those from exterior oyster beds pay six sous. No cock or hen, duck, goose, partridge, whether red or grey, snipe, plover, or other *palmipède*, can enter Havre without having paid a duty of six sous per head. Even larks do not escape. The *octroi* officer must have five centimes for every ten. Turkeys and hares pay nine sous entrance money each. Meat pastes pay fivepence the kilogramme, if not flavoured with truffles. Let the paste or pie include a truffle, and at once it is taxed one franc a kilogramme. Macaroni in all its varieties, whether dried or pre-

served, oranges, lemons, chestnuts, all pay. The most precise explanations accompany this list of taxes on the food of the town people. The importer is reminded that any mixture of wine and water will be considered as pure wine; that small cider will have to pay like full cider. A bottle containing cherries preserved in brandy will pay as though the bottle contained only brandy; no account will be taken by the *octroi* of the cherries. A list is given of the essences which are to be taxed as perfumes. Then follows an ample specification of the manner in which the weight of various parts of fresh meat will be calculated for taxation. The hoof of an ox is taken at one kilogramme, while four calves' feet make one kilogramme; and six sheeps' trotters, bullock's head or calve's head, if the tongues be cut out, pay only half the regular tax. Should any difficulty be put in the *octroi* officer's way, when he desires to prove whether a paste or pie be truffled or not, he may take it for granted that it is truffled, and charge accordingly.

In the same way, fuel of all kinds, and fodder, and building materials, are taxed at the town gates. In these times, when almost every article of food is at a higher price than it has ever been within the memory of the living generation, the reader can

understand the vexations and heart-burnings to which such taxation as this gives rise. Apart from the oppressive weight with which it falls upon the shoulders of the poorer class of people, there is its incessant and vexatious interference with every little transaction. It is an irritating inquisitorial tax, that ruffles the temper of the market-woman every morning. Only a few weeks ago I saw the system in full operation at one of the gates of Dieppe. A large cart had been emptied of its contents, and these were strewn in cases, and baskets, and parcels about the road. The carters were patiently repacking the candle and soap boxes. The unpacking had been so minute that the work of reloading and of reaching the shop for which these goods were destined in the town could not have taken less than a couple of hours.

It is where a vigorous spirit of commercial activity has been implanted, it is in a great port, in short, like Havre, that the bad effect of such an institution as this *octroi* is most severely felt. The *octroi* belt is round the city, and every day the growth of trade tends to its expansion, and here stands this little two-roomed customhouse on the high road in the way. It represents our excise system applied to

every article of food, to coals and candles, and building materials. Havre aspires to a great future. She has sent from her dockyards some of the finest ships in the imperial navy.

The imperial yacht, the Reine Hortense, is Havre built. The King of Prussia's model yacht is from this port. On the canal Vauban are the rivals in the construction of marine engines of Messrs. Maudslay, Field, & Co. The cordage which gained the medal of honour in the Exhibition of 1851 was made here. Let me not forget one local industry. It is a bottle manufactory, where two kinds of bottles are made for the English market, viz., one in imitation of the real cognac bottles, and another of the colour and shape (which, it seems, our bottle-makers cannot successfully imitate) of the Bordeaux bottles. The first are destined to be filled with spurious French brandy, and the second with manufactured or doctored clarets. The art of manufacturing on a great scale is understood here, and is applied to bread-making. There is one establishment that grinds about 30,000 pounds of flour in twenty-four hours, and makes sea biscuit, which is of admirable quality, by steam power. This biscuit, which seems to be far above the ordinary sea biscuit, I saw dis-

appearing in large quantities in sailors' bags on the quays, a day or two ago.

To the free growth of industries like these I have just indicated such an institution as the *octroi* must be a very serious impediment; it is the impediment against which every Frenchman's hand is raised, and which he believes must be dealt with before France can resolutely enter upon a commercial competition with England. You see this *octroi* is a tax upon every article in the workman's cupboard. It is levied on every ounce of butter, on every red herring, even on his pennyworth of pomatum. They who have ranted against the income tax as inquisitorial would surely go mad under the scrutiny of the *octroi* officer. French free-traders say that it is logical that the *octroi* barrier should fall after the triumph of free trade with foreign countries. They begin to see the might of agricultural France, and that her happy position and various fertility may some day make her not only independent of foreign markets, but a large contributor to that of England. She has got rid of the absurd restrictive laws of the first Revolution, of protection, and of the sliding-scale. She has become liberal and modest enough to get from abroad for the improvement of her agriculture

the machines and the races she had not at home; and now she is eager to have complete free trade in exports. Not only has she given up all idea of seeking protection through the custom-house for the high prices of her native produce, she urges the complete and final removal of those export hinderances which were set up by territorial protectionists in the interests of high prices and of high rents. She now says that free exportation is the true protection of her agriculture. French agricultural authorities call upon all landed proprietors and farmers to defend the principle of free exportation. They maintain that exportation, even before the sliding-scale fell, was a support and a benefit to native agriculture. This exportation, according to them, alone attracted some little capital to the soil when so many influences were at work to draw capital from it. The slow, the almost imperceptible, increase of population in France is a serious item to be taken into account. French agricultural writers say, and with much force, that since their population is almost stationary, it follows that, if agriculture is to prosper and increase with rapid strides, this improvement or increase must, as a logical sequence, come from exterior markets—in other words, from

a free export of that part of the increase of their agriculture for which no profitable market will be found at home. They go farther, and add, by way of encouragement to their compatriots, in order to direct their energies and their capital to the soil, that should the population resume its normal rate of increase, agriculture, made prosperous for a time by remunerative exportations, would be in a condition to supply amply the new demand in the home market. Already the greatest wheat-growing country in the world, France would become so full a granary that no increase in her population could consume it all, and she would be always able to deal profitably with her near customer and ally across the Channel.

CHAPTER VI.

FÉCAMP.

1866.

It is a proverb in these parts that at the Toussaint the corn should be sown and the fruits be garnered, and that henceforth to Christmas there cannot be too much wind or rain. *Faire le Toussaint* is in these parts to sow the corn. Ask a ploughman in the fields what he is about, and he will answer he is doing his Toussaint. We have the wind and the rain here together. The billows are tumbling with a deafening roar upon the steep coast of this rock-bound fishing port. It is not easy to conceive anything much more dreary than the closed and drenched wooden casino of fantastic shape, with the empty orchestra, the tables and chairs of the salons and cabinets, all turned upside down and packed in corners; and just one little room left, with a few scraps of furniture and a muslin curtain, wherein a dismal couple are bound to spend

the winter in the character of housekeepers. There is no ancient air about Fécamp, no trace of the Conqueror, no vestige of St. Waninge's nunnery, nor of William's huge palace; and was not even this built in part with the stones of an ancient Basilica? Yet these dreary winding little streets that stretch between gigantic rocks into the country, and this shambling place, where *paysans* are cheapening rough wooden bedsteads and chairs, have echoed with the martial clang of great Normans. The dust of Richard and Robert of Normandy are mingled with this soil. Here Cauchois peasants and fishermen of the coast stared at the long light-haired Saxons who came when the Conqueror William feasted in the palace. The most flourishing establishment in the town now appears to be the liqueur manufactory of the Benedictine monks. Time was when the monks possessed the whole town of Fécamp and thrived on it. But Fécamp has long since escaped from them. As the figure of this utilitarian age, Mrs. Browning has shaped a clown, who "culls simples with his back turned to the stars." These monks of Fécamp not only cull simples upon the bluff headlands with their backs turned to the stars, but they keep their eyes

strictly on business. They are no strangers to the art of advertising. They mark their bottles with the cross, and seal them with a holy seal. The crosier and the cowl are upon the cork, and daintily tied about the bottle's neck with a pink cord is suspended a paper in which the rare qualities of the liqueur within are set forth. The purchaser is assured that this liqueur, made by the holy hands of the monks, and sold by them at the low rate of nine francs per bottle, is in every minute particular the same as that their predecessors manufactured in the year of grace 1510. This liqueur gets its flavour from herbs which are gathered on the downs of Normandy. Lay distillers are in the habit of making liqueurs with spirit distilled from beetroot, or grain, or potatoes, but the holy monks use only the finest cognacs. Thus their liqueur is distinguished by its clean and unctuous quality and its delicious *bouquet*, which increases with age. It is "anti-apoplectic," "anti-spasmodic," and, "if used daily in moderation, will assist all the functions of the body." So say the monks, taking care at the same time to keep the reader informed as to their Paris agents, and their printers instructed about showy placards for hotel passages and dining-

rooms. Excellent men of business are these monks who cull their simples with their backs turned to the stars!

The monks have caught the new commercial spirit of Fécamp, and are well planted on the long straggling street that leads straight to the flaunting casino, by which the winter sea is moaning sadly this rainy day. A greed for a taste or two of the tourist's blood has come upon the once simple Norman people who inhabit the villages along this rugged coast. Every hamlet of a few houses is building itself a casino and baths, and launching wildly into the expense of colossal advertising boards at the railway stations. St. Valery-en-Caux, Veules, and Motteville, and, if I mistake not, Cany, have caught the fever. Is a Montmorency about to embark in a business that has made the fortune of M. Vigier?

"We have done very well here, Monsieur, this season" said the ruddy Cauchois, who had just served the farmer's dinner at the hotel of the Chariot of Gold, on the Place. "We have had plenty of visitors, and of the best class. And they have done very well at Valery; indeed, everywhere." And then she went off into divers reasons why

Fécamp was preferred to Étretat, or any other place on the coast. She was but a peasant girl, but she had learned all the local jargon set up for the purpose of fixing the tourist at Fécamp, and bleeding him there. It would really be a sin and shame to leave Fécamp without seeing the Castle of Cany, with its window for every day in the year, including the doors, as she observed in her simplicity. I had dropped upon the place after all the gay visitors had packed and gone, and it had settled down to winter and the mild excitement of a weekly vegetable market. The *table d'hôte* table was covered with the remains of the farmers' noon-tide dinner. Vast decanters, which had contained cider, some trays of fat black radishes, and plentiful fruit were left upon the table, with here and there a wine bottle encompassed with a napkin, and perhaps one-third emptied of its contents—showing the temperate habits of the diners who had risen from the table. How is it that we cultivate so few of these fine black radishes? They are no great dainty, albeit they are much liked in Normandy. Oysters are plentiful at Fécamp, the hotel price of them being fifteen sous per dozen. But they are, as served in a vast square dish—a *parc* in little; brown and ragged, and unsightly, in

the eyes of an Englishman. Lying in a vast, rough, sedgy shell, only one dozen can be served in the ample dish that would hold three or four dozen of the English natives. The oysters at Havre are of the same quality, whether of the large or small variety. But both at Fécamp and at Havre there is a great consumption of them. At the latter port, on the Grand Quai, are oyster cellars, decorated with grotesque patterns in the shells of shell-fish, where people consume many dozens; but neither at one town nor the other is there an oyster fishery strictly speaking. Fishermen sometimes bring oysters with other fish to the Havre market, according to the season and the weather, I am told, on the best authority; but they are not controlled by any regulations at Havre, and there is no local account taken of this industry.

The market-place of Fécamp is the most primitive, and at the same time the most picturesque, one it is possible to imagine. To a scene-painter it would be a gem. It is entered through an ancient and ragged stone gateway. It is a square, enclosed by old houses of all heights and sizes and broken shapes. A series of low, stoutly-timbered sheds stretch along the walls and in irregular lines through the open space. It is

hardly possible to tell with what material they are roofed, since it is thickly crusted with bright yellow and brown and green fungus growth. Under the deep overhanging eaves of the sheds, the great masses of many richly-coloured fruit and vegetables, looking fresh as this Norman morning in which they were gathered—make exquisite bits of colour against the deep sombre of the back of the stalls. At every fresh Norman market I reach the vegetables seem to be greener, the fruit rosier and richer, and the pumpkins of a greater girth than at the last. Then the market folk, in gay and daring colours, every one of them; some carrying red umbrellas, some in geranium petticoats, a vast number in the national blue; the women topped with caps of snow of the new, unseemly Norman pattern, and the men in varieties of headgear starting from the King of Yvetot's crown, the *bonnet de coton,* to feeble and uncertain imitations of the *bosselard,* to use the Paris *gamin's* latest slang;—crowd, chattering in high notes their confusing *patois,* driving donkeys and leading uncombed horses, rope-tied to vehicles that by some mysterious agency hold together. A *paysanne,* her basket full of groceries, and a solid bit of meat that is to make the *pot-au-feu* delectable, is

cheapening a pair of bottle-green velvet inexpressibles second hand, for her eldest born, who is eagerly watching the progress of the bargain. The backs of the stalls are part cowshed and part *café*. The *cafés* are enclosed by rough boards, with two boards nailed together for a door. One is the *Café des Bouchers*, being near the ruddy-faced butcher's men and women. The women, it may be remarked *en passant*, wield immense choppers with a swiftness that thrills the blood of the nervous, inexperienced observer. Another *café* is marked *Tenu par Lisé*, leaving us to deduct from the exterior of this boarded shed what *Lisé* must be like; not that one can pause indulging in many reflections hereabouts. The crowd is constantly on the move, and the baskets have an awkward habit of bruising the ribs of the unwary. All available open space is covered with articles for sale. Tilted carts display tempting mounds of gingerbread. There are piles of sabots; and in another direction are gay-coloured clothes and coarse crockery, such as it would be impossible to equal for barbarous and bad make in any part of the United Kingdom. Art has certainly not yet approached even the threshold of the French peasant's home. In the midst, with laughing vacant face,

stalks a man most fantastically clad—a fool, a jester, a wandering minstrel, a deafening band on two legs, the spoiled child of the market-place. Upon his head is a towering pagoda, musical with bells. He is not a man to be offended, for he carries cymbals and drum, and speaks through pandean pipes, and commands the handle of a hurdy-gurdy. He was the delight of the chattering Cauchois, whose nerves defied the full force of all his instruments played at once. I could not help, as I contemplated this fantastic figure armed with a nuisance at all points, wondering what would be his fate, or rather what would be the course adopted by the philosopher, if unkind fate should in wanton mood lead him some day under the windows of Mr. Babbage.

I found, however, that the man of many instruments did not enjoy undisturbed musical possession of Fécamp. From the window of the Golden Chariot I was amused by the appearance of a systematic organ-grinder on the Place. He was a man of business; he was a Frenchman; and therefore, albeit an organ-grinder, a man of system. Planting himself in a commanding position in the Place, away from the houses, rows of country saddlers, tailors, grocers, and barbers of the humblest

description, he despatched the girl who was with him, and who was provided with a wooden leg in support of her petition for alms, to a corner door, whence she made a house-to-house application, while he made doleful music, and was not at the pains of stirring. A man without system would have walked every step in the wake of the girl.

On my way to the railway station I stood watching a white team of horses ploughing the opposite hill, so high up and far away, that the horses looked like white mice upon the brown land, and marked how true it was that at Fécamp the ears of the corn almost touched the sides of the fishing-boats, that the men who ploughed the rich upland touched the elbows of the sailors, who spread their nets to dry in the sun. I had seen that there was not the least reason for the Emperor to be anxious about the condition of the good people of Fécamp and the neighbourhood.

The abundance of the country can be seen from the central Place; and now that tourists of the richer class have been tempted to every little village along the coast, the fat land will bring fortunes to its proprietors and cultivators. These Normans are quick to find where and how they may make advance in

prices. I had, I should say, little more than the quarter of a rabbit at the Hotel of the Golden Chariot, for which the hostess did me the honour of charging me three francs. I was a winter straggler from the main body of the enemy, and at once she marked me. Is it not the same story—I will not say at Dieppe, for there the plunder of the stranger is a matter of honour among the citizens; but at Havre and other places even the chemist doubles his price as you enter his shop. Money-making is the passion of the Norman, whether he be townsman or countryman. To see a woman from the country on market day haggling with a fisherman for a bunch of fresh herrings, is to witness an exhibition of feminine keenness on both sides which could not be easily matched. At Fécamp every other countryman had a string of herrings dangling from his finger; while along the port the fishwives were trudging heavily home, their baskets piled with market produce. Both make good bargains and live well, and know directly when a stranger approaches them, or how to profit by any strong taste he shows for a fruit, a cheese, or a particular vegetable. I praised some Pont Evéque cheese, as having a fine and delicate flavour: whereupon my Cauchoise attendant sang a hymn in its

praise, and commended my taste, and told me how all the great folk who had been in the neighbourhood during the season, had praised that same cheese. And, I doubt not, had paid for it.

It is very difficult for the stranger, let him go where he may among the old towns or baths of Normandy, to taste of any of its produce at the country price. The people have made ready for him everywhere. Among other blessings, the railways have brought to country innkeepers the tariffs of Paris hotels to be faithfully copied by them. On the Grand Quai at Havre, for instance, which is covered with wine barrels, and egg chests, and sacks of corn, and droves of cattle, where pigs and calves are ever dangling in the air from cranes under the hotel windows, being landed from the Caen or Honfleur boats, where the eye rests upon black seas of net tarpauling, where the oysters are planted here and there at the doors in huge, deep baskets, and where there is, in short, the least likelihood of finding stray holiday people; even here has the landlady a sure scent of any tourist who may reach her obscure little business hostelry, where skippers and American emigrants and customs-men are her chief guests. Her hotel has a sounding Parisian name, that recommends it to him

who is not initiated into the mysteries of Havre hotel life; and for this one she can make up a bill on the Parisian model, even to the Paris hotel imposition on pale ale.

At Bignon's you pay the same price for a sole cooked well—as they cook *chez* Bignon—as you pay at a master mariner's hotel on a Havre quai. There is plenty round about, and the shops bespeak it. The vegetable barrows are piled high up; great bunches of leeks are tied fantastically against the grocers' doors. The oyster boats lie moored under your nose. You are in the midst of the tar, and mud, and oyster-shells, and rough jollity of a crowded port. Parrots chatter in the door-ways; models of boats are in the low little *cafés*, kept by worn-out mariners or their widows. Yellow and black dreadnoughts hang like damp seaweed over slopsellers' windows. To the right the sailor is attracted by *vin d'equipage* (crew's wine) at 60 centimes the litre, and on the other, by ship chandlers and stacks of sea biscuit. You can't get away from it at Havre. The rows of ships stretch into the heart of the city. Old figure-heads are the first objects you see as the train slackens near the terminus. They throw a shadow on the men chaffering on the open Exchange, and

you might hear the sails flap in the theatre. A busy place is Havre; and all its docks, the dock de la Barre, du Roi, du Commerce, de Vauban, and the dock de l'Eure are lined with ships from every part of the world. Still, the French Liverpool is very far astern of the great city on the Mersey. One advantage, however, Havre has over Liverpool. At the mouth of the Seine there is not that horrible poverty, that omnipresent beggary which defaces the glory of our Liverpool. Here you cannot count Tom-all-alones by the thousand. The Hotel de Ville is not thickly encompassed with beggars speaking every language. The Rue de Paris is not the resort of half-naked troops of haggard babes. Its alleys are not choked with the half-starved. Life is much easier. The sailors are much what they are in all other ports. Ashore, after a long cruise, the money turns in their pockets, and the dram-shops are not a stone's throw from the ship's side. I have seen some thorough examples of what our seafaring neighbours can show in the way of intoxication. At Dieppe the boys drink. I came upon three little urchins, each about twelve years of age, one morning—they were sailor boys—the three were swaggering towards a dram-shop, when one, turning upon his companion,

said, "Who pays the *goutte* this time?" But Havre, and Dieppe, and Fécamp, and, indeed, any French port, compares advantageously with Liverpool.

In these Norman ports you will never find a woman *entre deux vins*. You never see the fisherwomen leaning against the wine-shops. They very seldom enter them. There are hundreds of hard-worked fishwomen at Fécamp, and Boulogne, and Calais, and Dunkirk, and Dieppe who are in the cold and wet from morn till night, who tug the fishing-boats to the pier-head, who carry the take of fish ashore, who clean, and spread, and mend the nets, who see their husbands, and brothers, and lovers lounging in and out of the brandy-shop from dawn till night when ashore, and yet who remain scrupulously sober and frugal, and never let their hands be idle. Waiting for a load, the fishwife squats upon her basket, and brings forth her knitting-needles. Every woman has a pair of stockings in progress, and will walk briskly along the port, plying her needles as she goes, with a heavy basket slung at her back. At this season of the year, when a fleet of fishing-boats comes with every tide into each fishing port on this Norman coast, the wives of the fishermen have a very hard time of it; indeed, they are up with the first

peep of day, and never rest until the boats have left by the night tide. The gutters are full of fish scales, carried on a reeking tide from the curing-houses. Processions of carts block up the port, laden with the deep herring-baskets. It wants tremendous energy on the part of the fishing population of Dieppe or Fécamp to dispose of the boat loads as they come in in quick succession. The railway carries off an immense quantity. Here is the take at Dieppe alone for three days in the season:—On the 4th, forty-seven boats entered the harbour, with 6,500 *mesures* (the measures of herrings)—I should observe that a measure contains on an average 150 fish.

These fish sold at from 6½f. to 4½f. per measure. On the following day, forty-three boats carried in only 1,600 measures, and the prices ranged from 6f. 70c. to 7f. 75c. per measure. On the 6th inst, twenty-three boats caught 2,600 measures, and the prices ranged from 10f. to 5f. 10c. per measure. It is a speculative business for the fishermen. On the following day, for instance, the boats could catch nothing, and had to sail off to Berck, whither they will have to go, the season being now much advanced, it is feared, until this year's herring fishery is over. We may take the average price of herrings at 6f. per measure

of 150. This will give us the market price of a herring at 4c., or five for 2d. At such a price they ought to be cheap enough, in spite of octrois and duties, even in Paris.

It is not extraordinary that the people of this province, or of any other that is within the direct influence of the Parisian market, should petulantly answer, when asked why any native produce is so dear, that Paris absorbs it as Havre absorbs the produce of the country round about, and Dieppe that of the Aliermont. They will not go into the political economy of the subject. Paris absorbs that which formerly they had in great plenty. They are jealous that Paris should have the plumpest turkey, the picked herrings, the finest turbot, the best corn of the harvest; they have a sneer for Parisian fastidiousness.

Have they not been told by M. Husson that even the Paris poor will not eat brown bread, and this is the daily bread of the agriculturist, who buys it by hard labour from morning to night in the fields? This brown bread is more nourishing than the delicate white bread made from the finest flour. But the sensitive Paris pauper will not have his *dignité d'homme* hurt. The French workman thinks he has

reached the lowest step of the social ladder when the narrowness of his means compels him to eat brown sugar. Provincial townsmen will talk very discontentedly about the fastidiousness of the Parisians, and more especially of the time when the Government gave them their fine bread under its cost price. This concession, made when flour was very dear, cost the Paris municipality more than two millions sterling. The Parisians were to give back the amount when bread should become cheap, but the return has not yet been made.

It is to the enormous consumption of meat in Paris that the country folk attribute its high price. In 1830 the capital consumed 600,000 head of cattle, and now the consumption exceeds 1,200,000. Now, while the demand in this one centre has doubled during 30 years, there has been no corresponding increase in the production of cattle. The provincial has engraved these facts on his memory. The Parisian consumes half the fat oxen, and only one hundredth part of the cow beef. He eats only the best parts of the animal, and sends the inferior joints back to the country. He eats ten times as much meat as the inhabitant of the Lozère or of the Creuse. M. Husson gives it as a remarkable fact

that the area whence Paris draws her supply of meat has not been materially enlarged by the railways. Not many great cattle breeders have sprung up in distant places tempted by the facilities offered by the railways. Thus, Paris exhausts the provinces round about her. The average Parisian lives well. He consumes a hectolitre of wine every year, without taking into account beer, or cider or spirits. The best *crus* of Burgundy and of the Bordelais are for him. He eats ten kilogrammes of poultry and game. For fish, he has the best the sea supplies. It has become a saying that if the Havre merchant wants a fine fish for his dinner table, he must send to Paris for it. Paris consumes more milk than all the departments of the South of France put together. Twenty departments send to her butter market, but her finest butters are derived from Normandy and Brittany.

Some years ago M. Husson started an admirable idea for lessening the high price of milk in the French capital. The reader should know that the hospitals have a general and mutually advantageous organisation by which they are all supplied with milk at something under three sous a litre. M. Husson's plan was to make the farmers who supplied

the capital band together, and have a central establishment whence every metropolitan arrondissement could be served at a reasonable price. But it would be no light task to get a large concourse of farmers from various departments to come to an agreement on this or any other subject. M. Husson's tables of the fine fruits, the hot-house luxuries, the green peas carried all the way from Algeria in the month of January, and of the hundred and one other luxuries of the palate which, bought to the extent of millions of francs, and which the provincial rarely, if ever, tastes, must have an irritating effect on the bucolic mind. M. Delavergne apparently endeavours to reconcile the mass of his countrymen to the absorbing luxuries of Paris by assuring them, which he does on very unsubstantial authorities, that London diet is of a very poor and deficient quality. He considers, however, the average diet of the English people better than that of the French. But he draws his conclusions from nebulous premises. He has a lordly way of dealing in round numbers. He tells his readers that a fourth of the immense population of London consists of paupers, and that the three remaining fourths are composed of workmen, sailors, and small shopkeepers, who live, as a rule,

less well than the citizens of Paris. He will not agree with M. Husson that the Londoner eats more meat than the Parisian. He says that M'Culloch, "like all Englishmen," is disposed to exaggerate figures when dealing with his own country, and yet he has concluded that the Londoner eats less meat than the Parisian; and then the Frenchman concludes that, in round numbers, the Londoner and the Parisian are on an equality as meat-consumers, having 80 kilogrammes, or something over 160lb., each. He is bold enough to add that Paris meat is superior to that of London. "Only look at the butchers' shops in the two capitals," he cries. London may have the advantage in mutton, but Paris has the best beef and veal. Nay, the inferior meats which are sent away from Paris for want of buyers are exported to perfidious Albion to feed the less dainty cockneys! Then Paris bread is as good as that of London is bad. I agree with both M. Husson and M. Delavergne that the Parisian eats much more bread than the Londoner. But the Londoner has an enormous advantage over his Parisian brother in the bountiful supply of cheap fish at his command.

There are no great fishmongers in any part of the French capital. Fish seldom enters into the Paris

workman's diet, nor is it true, as M. Delavergne asserts (I presume, lacking experience of London markets), that the supply and quality of vegetables in Paris are greater and superior to those of London. He is right when he dwells on the dull monotony of the Englishman's table. But his illustration is amusingly unfaithful. He tells his readers that the dinner of an English duke does not differ much from that of the shopkeeper or workman. At both there is the roast meat, the boiled fish, and the potatoes *à l'eau*. This will be news to the peer, the shopkeeper, and the workman. Plain roast and boiled has his grace the duke. He is a stranger to *entrées*, and wonders what the flavour of a truffle may be like. Potatoes *maître d'hôtel* are not within his ken, and he must travel to the banks of the Seine if he would enjoy a sole *au gratin!* The kitchen of the peer and the kitchen of the peasant are alike.

Now, M. Delavergne observes, by way of contrast to the dull level of British cookery, "There is a sensible difference between the dinner of a Paris workman and a Breton labourer." Carried away by his patriotism, M. Delavergne asserts that in Paris are found the best bread, and the best meat, the greatest variety of dishes of any city in the world.

He will not yield poor London a redeeming point. "You cannot compare the beer of England to the wine of France!" he exclaims. He winds up his comparison by the assertion, that London is not so rich as his native capital. According to him, England gains by the unattractiveness of her capital. Wealth is spread, and fructifies over the country. There is not the same contrast between London and a country town, as there is between Paris and any arrondissement *chef-lieu*. Hence, he argues, that, if Paris ceased to be the capital of France, she would be ruined; whereas, London would hardly feel the change if the seat of Government were removed from her. He attributes this to our railway system, in part; France being almost entirely deficient in connecting lines. Her population and produce are carried to centres; whereas, by the English railway system, people and produce can spread easily in all directions. The difference in the food consumed in the various provinces of the empire is, as stated by M. Delavergne, extraordinary. If the dwellers in provincial towns consumed much less meat per head than the citizens of Paris, the French agricultural labourer is less luxuriously nourished than the inhabitant of the least favoured little bourg. He

tastes neither meat, nor wheat, nor wine. He lives on rye, buckwheat, potatoes, and water. This, according to M. Delavergne, is the diet of one-third of his countrymen. This writer is justified in deploring the contrast there is, for instance, between the highly-cultivated gardens about Paris and the careless and unprofitable husbandry not far off. The splendours of the city have dried up the country. Then he has a comparison between his country and ours. He tells his countrymen that the whole of England resembles Hyde Park. There is evidence of careful husbandry even to the most mountainous districts of Westmoreland. In England the capital takes no riches from the country which she does not return to it. Agriculture is not neglected for gambling on 'Change.

Yet, while we are depending more and more every year on foreign corn markets, while we pay more than £25,000,000 annually for foreign breadstuffs France is immensely increasing her cereal yield. The agricultural produce is larger, according to her population, than ours, and so is that of her live-stock. Our increase in population has been immensely greater than hers. We have been increasing the size of our farms, and therefore reducing largely the

number of rural holders; while agricultural France is split up into more than 41,000,000 of farms, more than 11,000,000 of which do not exceed in extent eight English acres. In France there are 4,800,000 large and small landed proprietors. More than 11,000,000 hectares are under the metayer system. These small holders, and metayers and farmers live the frugal agricultural life I have described. Paris takes labour from the land in the departments which encompass her and feel her evil influence. Again, she drains capital from the soil. But, under the existing system of small farming, whether it be scientifically sound or wasteful, at least this result lies broad and clear before every man's eyes—that she has food, and more than enough for her great population, that in her great cities there is no misery so poignant as that which abounds in ours, and that her tables of exports and imports show the balance of trade to be in her favour.

Mr. William Ray Smee, in arguing in favour of the admission of the cheap wines of France at the duty of 6d. per gallon, or 1d. per bottle, suggests that duty be put on French eggs at the rate of 1d. for every 30, and on butter at the rate of ½d. per pound. Then might the duties on all light wines

from all foreign countries be abolished, without loss of revenue. It is true that oats are charged a duty of 1s. per qr., and that they are imported to the value of more than £2,000,000 annually. Eggs and butter, if burdened with the light tax suggested, would still be imported, though perhaps not to the existing extent of £1,500,000 per annum. But these are not reasons why such duties should be imposed. Granted that it is highly desirable that the duty on French wines should be reduced to 1d. per bottle; no ingenuity in pleading can make it appear desirable for one moment to an unprejudiced mind that a tax should be taken off wine to be put on eggs and butter.

No doubt the consumption of the light cheap wines of France, such as the workpeople of France consume, would be an agreeable change from beer to the English people, and a healthy change. Not that the cheapest French wine can ever penetrate to the English agricultural districts, and stand to the labourer in the stead of his beer, for a day. The French peasant, who lives in a wine-growing district, drinks wine and flourishes on it, as the Norman drinks and flourishes on cider, and as our Devonshire labourers drink cider also; because these drinks come from the soil at their feet; and because they are the

cheapest within their reach. French wine can never become the cheapest wine within the reach of the British working classes. Have I not observed already, that *vin d'equipage* is sixpence a litre on the quays at Havre? But the reduction of the import duties on French wines to 1d. per bottle, is not the less desirable because it cannot bring claret to the lips of Hodge. When it can be sold, as Mr. Smee promises, retail for 1s. per bottle, and yield a profit of 3d. to the retailer, it will be the best temperance agent intemperate England could wish to have. I have touched upon some of the points which explain the advantage the French labourers and artisans have over their English brethren; how it is that with less wages here there is less misery. The great point, however, in the Frenchman's favour, whether he be cultivator of the soil or driver of the shuttle, is his temperance. This temperance induces other good habits—the habit of saving, of forethought. Where the temperance is giving way to habits of intoxication, as among the Dieppe masons and the fishermen of the Pollet, other social virtues are going by the board. And he who grew and garnered his flax and had it spun in his cottage doorway, is destined, in this country of stout linen, to become acquainted with rags.

CHAPTER VII.

YVETÔT.

On waking at the Hotel des Victoires, in the centre of the ancient kingdom of Yvetôt, in a spacious old room, with big beams across it, and a bulky walnut press in one corner, with no less than three huge oak tables dotted about other parts of the room—everything solid and hard, and well adapted to the carousals of a race of giants—I saw that I was fairly off the tourist's high-road; and was not likely to hear either English or Parisian French on the great staircase without. The hotel yard was a broad farm-yard, and at daybreak it was noisy with carters and stablemen, and the tramp of horses' hoofs and the cackle of poultry. It stretched far away and terminated with a big pond, where the palmipedes disported themselves and the horses drank.

A wet, råw, Sunday morning! This is the "little-

market" day of Yvetôt, and every kind of country vehicle, from the rustiest of rusty cabriolets to the most ricketty cart, painted sky-blue, rumbled and creaked amid the shrill jargon and *patois* of the farmers and their jolly spouses. Everything was soaked; and as the women popped their white heads beyond the hood or tarpauling of the drenched cabriolet or cart, they thrust forth an apple-green or a blood-red cotton umbrella to protect the starch of the Sunday head-gear. Every man and woman, ay, without exception, carried a wicker basket. Everybody had brought something, and had just a little dealing to do before going to mass. From another window of my roomy chamber I could see the crowded market-place in front of the church. The briskness of it is not in any way dulled by the steady down-pour. The lamp swinging across the street in the ancient fashion, upon ropes, is a little in my way; but I can watch the greeting of the countryfolk and the townfolk. I plainly saw the butcher boy opposite salute on both cheeks, first the farmer in his sea-green blouse, and then his buxom wife, and subsequently two or three daughters; and, apparently very much refreshed by the operation, he passed gaily on his way with his basket of veal. The uneven

road, and pavements quite as uneven, are gradually covered with the gay colours of the countryfolk. The baker is doing a brave business in *galette*, and the Yvetôt cooks are trudging away well laden with new gathered vegetables, and the two little green-shuttered *cafés* are filling and emptying incessantly.

Suddenly, in the midst of the throng, two or three robed priests and chorister boys, headed by the bearer of the crucifix, come shambling through the crowd followed by a square, open, shabby black hearse, on which lies a child's coffin. One of the priests is carelessly leaning upon the shaft against the black horse, and each priest holds a big cotton umbrella over him. The funeral seemed to be as much a matter of business as the marketing; albeit a few uncovered as it passed. In spite of the rain, I sat enjoying this wet Sunday morning, and selecting a king of Yvetôt to my liking among the old fellows in cotton nightcaps, who at intervals passed under my window. Certain I am that I saw him—a lively, plump farmer, with some fifteen or twenty acres a few miles off on one of the rich slopes, with fat porkers in his yard, and hams and sides of bacon slung up over his chimney corner, and no stint of stout, wheat bread, and a big iron pot slung over

the wood fire, gurgling ever with a toothsome *pot-au-feu,* flavoured richly from the vegetable gardens.

And I saw his *Jeanneton,* who had crowned him with his cotton nightcap—a mahogany-visaged queen, with the low flat Norman cap of these times, and blue skirts and apron tied behind, and deeper blue worsted stockings, and wooden shoes, the noise of which would kill some queens. Not one less than four repasts per day does my king of Yvetôt make under the thatch of his palace, with his dog crouching at his chair for bodyguard, and his long-eared charger browsing under his hedges. He has a dry throat, I guess, when I see him touch the brass handle of the little *café* door, and presently come out chuckling, and pass his blouse-sleeve across his stubbly chin. I have seen his honest face caricatured in the shop-window of a *chemisier* in the Passage Jouffroy. I have dipped my pen into his abdomen, his figure being turned frequently to account as a design for an inkstand. But I like him best in the flesh, when he comes to his beloved capital with his exquisite Norman butter for the *petit marché* of Sunday, and, if he be in luck, drop into a snug corner of his *café,* that has neither gilding nor gewgaw about it, and, planting his massive

hands upon the bare board, orders himself a plate of tripe *à la mode de Caen.*

I had remarked, on entering the Hotel des Victoires on Saturday night, that to the left of the main entrance there was an ancient kitchen of noble size, and that in it stood the *cordon bleu* of Yvetôt, a man of greasy countenance and well fed withal. I found that his kitchen was a rich, substantial one. The rough country waiter was of opinion that tripe *à la mode de Caen* (or tripe stewed in rich gravy, with plentiful carrots and onions) was, with a kidney or two, and solid proportions of bread and butter, just a nice light breakfast at nine o'clock in the morning. Here I was planted at last, in a thorough Norman farmers' inn, a place of substantial rooms and substantial dishes, and fair farmers' prices. It being a wet morning, I could take a constitutional round my room. There was a liberal air about the place, unlike the narrow rooms and grasping bill-making of the shabby little imitation of Paris hotels at Havre. Let the reader judge. A complete tea was 7½d., the tripe *à la mode de Caen* was 5d., and two exquisitely-cooked kidneys *à la brochette* were 5d. also. There was no attempt to impose upon the stranger for *bougies* and attendance, albeit both were excellent.

I suppose the tourists will soon overflow into this quaint little town of the whimsical history. An omnibus already goes to meet the trains. It will bring back some day a copy of Paris hotel prices. Then, I suppose, these lines of carts and rusty cabriolets and ricketty gigs will be dismissed from the farmyard behind the hotel, and a great *salle à manger* will be thrown out, and hung with red cotton curtains, and the king of Yvetôt will be done in every imaginable form. Biding this time, the simple farm people and country tradesmen of this *chef lieu* of the Seinte-Inférieure are content with the most moderate excitement.

The local paper, *L'Abeille Cauchoise,* is at a loss how to fill even its few little columns; so it falls back on the past, and devotes the greater part of its space to *éphémérides,* being a list of notable events in the former history of Yvetôt, arranged in chronological order. Among these are the number of *huissiers* in the year 1812, the election of a *juge de paix* under the Restoration, and other equally memorable events. A really notable point is given with untiring prolixity. On the 6th of November, 1803, First Consul Bonaparte, accompanied by his wife, passed through Yvetôt. We have an account of

where the triumphal arch was raised, who went out to meet him, the fulsome speeches that were delivered to him, and his gracious replies, how he displayed profound knowledge of every local industry, samples of which were submitted to him, and how when a banquet was offered to him he accepted only a biscuit. Still the *éphémérides* cannot supply the void in the *Abeille's* gaping columns, and the editor is apparently compelled to lay collections of conundrums under contribution. A local fact is a prize. The leading one in the first number of this journal that came under my notice was the announcement that a pear from a tree in the Rue de l'Eglise would be exhibited to the public on the following Sunday. It was 44 centimetres high, 38 centimetres in circumference, and weighed 920 grammes. This gigantic pear was of the kind known as *la Duchesse*. But the editor of the *Abeille Cauchoise* had not the least hesitation, he says, in calling the splendid fruit in question a *Princesse*.

One important announcement the *Abeille* did contain, and that was to the effect that the senator prefect of the department had commanded the Council of Prudhommes to open an inquiry into the means of promoting co-operation in the canton.

They who have anything to say on this principle, or its application to the locality, are invited to address their observations to the Prudhommes. The Imperial Government is in earnest about the application of the co-operative system, seeing in it, no doubt, a palliative of the evils of these dear times. It is in earnest also about the agricultural condition of the whole empire, and it will not be long before the public will be in possession of full and valuable reports on the condition of French agriculture since the application of the law of the 16th June, 1861. The Emperor's recent visit to Brittany was to examine the model farm of the Princess Baciocchi at Korn-et-Houet. Already fifty departments have declared their intention of sending in a return of their agricultural condition to the Government. Frenchmen are becoming alive to the fact that three-fourths of the soil is insufficiently manured and badly cultivated; that France is surrounded with countries the agriculture of which is superior to hers, and that it rests only with herself to export great quantities of food, as well as her incomparable art and other manufactures. The successes of the Crédit Foncier and the Crédit Agricole have been great, and have done something towards relieving the land from the

grip of the usurer, and towards putting the capital in the reach of the farmer at a low rate of interest. But the condition of the agriculturist is still very bad; and is in need of help, and the new, long-promised Rural Code.*

The Crédit Foncier is an institution of recent date in France; but it is one, the operations of which have increased with extraordinary rapidity. A Government inquiry instituted in the Council of State in the year 1850, ended in the establishment of the fact that the regular cost of money raised on mortgage on land was 8 per cent. They found, also, that the

* M. Viutry, in answer to a question put to the Government by the Senate (February, 1867), explained that a "thousand unforeseen difficulties" had impeded the work of the Council of State. The new Rural Code is divided into three books. The first book treats of the laws affecting the land; the second book of the laws which govern the use and distribution of water-power, irrigation, &c.; and the third book describes the regulations of the rural police. According to the President of the Ministry of State, the regulation of water-courses and streams is surrounded with so many delicate questions, and has brought into play so many contending interests, that it has been impossible to proceed quickly with the code that is to finally regulate them. In short, the Government is waiting for the result of the agricultural inquiry now in progress, to put the finishing touches to the new Rural Code. It has been urged, that this code should be issued book by book, as the great Code Napoléon was.

registered mortgages amounted to 560,000,000 sterling. After deducting closed mortgages, &c., they found there were more than 320,000,000 sterling of mortgages paying an interest annually of more than 25 millions and a half sterling. Such a state of things could not be permitted to last. It threatened to destroy French agriculture under the thumb of the usurer. The Crédit Foncier was instituted by a decree, dated the 28th of February, 1852. Under this decree, associations have been established for lending money at reasonable interest, for the extinction of the old usurious mortgages.

The Crédit Foncier system, while it offers complete security to the lender or investor, gives every reasonable advantage and facility to the borrower, and at a fair rate of interest. Now, these societies under the Crédit Foncier system, can emit shares or debentures only to the extent of the loans which they make. This restriction is a guarantee to the holder of such debentures, that he possesses in them a complete and inconvertible security. The property on which their value is secured, must be at least worth twice the extent of the mortgage on it. The property mortgaged under the Crédit Foncier is beforehand relieved of every other liability. If default is made of the

payment of the interest on the mortgage, the property may be immediately sequestrated, and even rapidly sold at a very slight cost. So the capitalist is well secured.

The landowners, whether large or small, find a great saving and advantage in having recourse to the Crédit Foncier, when it is necessary for them to contract a loan. The legal interest on a mortgage is 4½ per cent. The preliminary expense, and that of the redemption of the loan, raise the total interest to 6 per cent. per annum, being 2 per cent. less than was before exacted from them. But this is not all. The borrower is not compelled to return the loan at all. All he is bound to do is to pay the interest with regularity, and, at the expiration of forty years, the mortgage is cancelled and the borrower's property is free. Thus the mortgages now in force, which are estimated at 320,000,000 sterling, under the Crédit Foncier system will die at the expiration of their forty years. The land has been relieved by this system to the extent of 4,000,000 sterling annually.

While the Government has been endeavouring in this way to lighten the burdens of the land, and to put capital within the farmer's reach at a low rate of interest, a system of irrigation has been pushed for-

ward of late, in the central and southern departments of France especially. Last year 101 canals, that would irrigate and water 222,000 hectares of land, were planned out. Fourteen decrees were published, making over for cultivation 18,350 hectares of reclaimed land; but the works planned last year were to the extent of three millions and a half sterling, and it was estimated that this outlay would improve and bring under cultivation land to the value of more than 13,000,000 sterling. Then draining of land is proceeding slowly under the law of 1858, by which the Government makes advances of money at reduced interests to farmers for this purpose. From 1858 to the beginning of 1864, only forty-four applications for loans had been granted, the entire sum disbursed being £33,280 for the drainage of 3,793 hectares of land. Last year only six loans were made, the sum granted being £2,844 for the drainage of 375 hectares. M. Maurice Block maintains that if the Government method for the encouragement of drainage by the grant of loans on easy terms are little used, at any rate the gratuitous services of Government engineers are eagerly put into requisition. Last year they superintended the drainage of 5,500 hectares. On the 1st of January, 1864, the total

number of hectares drained was about 161,000. The cost per hectare was £2 10s., and the gain on each hectare was a little over £30, so that while the entire expenditure had been £1,440,000, the value gained in land had been £3,120,000. In the Landes of Gascony the reclaiming of waste land has been pursued with activity. Forty-six thousand hectares have been completely reclaimed, and 227,000 hectares are under treatment. The population of the Landes have been grateful for the interference and the help of Government, and have in every case done their utmost to promote the works which are destined to convert their flat and profitless wilderness of bog and rank verdure into fruitful fields and fine plantations.

We must not wonder that drainage makes slow progress in this country; and that the Council of State have found it difficult to frame a code of laws on the subject. Imagine a system of drainage that shall have to pass through 30 or 40 little parcels of land, each parcel owned by one of these somewhat benighted cultivators of the lower Seine, who are chattering here at Yvetôt, in the heavy rain, under the windows of the Hotel des Victoires. The law compels one to yield to the other, the lower land to drain the higher; but the bickerings, the impedi-

ments to be got over in such a case, must greatly retard the wide application of drainage to the soil. The incontestable superiority of well-drained over badly-drained land will be an overwhelming argument in the end, even to the most pig-headed and unamiable little landowner; but for a moment he is an obstacle in the way; he hates anything new; he detests an improvement as the Parisian pauper rejects brown bread and the Scotchman loathes eels, and as the starving Irishman in famine time, spurned Indian corn. You see that the French Government —having, when the improvement of agriculture is in question, to deal with an enormous body of petty, prejudicial, ignorant landed proprietors—can make a change for their good only at a snail's pace. The scholars are wilful and suspicious of the professor. They at once assume that he has come to get something out of them; not for a moment that he seeks their good. This suspicion and disbelief in a high and good motive is a strong barrier, which turns many an earnest well-wisher of his poorer and less educated neighbours away from them in disgust. It exists to an extraordinary extent among the rural, ay, and among the town populations of Normandy. The disinclination to afford a stranger any information on

trade or produce is universal. Ask a question of a Norman, and he is on his guard at once. He philosophises, I apprehend, in this way—"In the first place, what am I to get by answering the question? Can anything accrue out of it to my benefit, or not? In the second place, what is the stranger's motive for putting this question to me—what does he propose to do for his own gain with my reply? In the third place, seeing no advantage to myself, and not the least reason why I, who am apparently to get nothing, should serve the stranger, I shall decide to know nothing whatever about the subject on which he is seeking information from me."

I remember that when I first began to make some inquiries about the produce and the exports of Normandy, I addressed myself to an Englishman in the pay of her Majesty, who was recommended to afford me all the information within his compass. He had lived very many years of official life in Normandy, and had been, according to my information, engaged in sundry protracted commercial transactions among the knowing Normans. I explained the objects of my mission, and waited for a few indications of the manner in which I should set to work. But the oracle was dumb. I led up to my points from a fresh

direction, and still I got only a word or two. This industry was not doing much. *Monsieur un tel,* could tell me about the other point. The people round about were a poor set.

He knew nothing about the oyster fishery. He didn't remember, he couldn't say, he had not the least idea; and then shaking hands, he was sure he should be delighted to afford me any further information. He had caught the Norman caution. Ask how many herrings go to the measure, what is their average price, stroll round an oyster *parc* and seek to know when the young oysters are put there, how their beds are laid, and the time they take greening and growing to perfection, and you will find what a talent these Normans have for evasion. Why should I want to know the age of the perfect oyster, or the mystery of his greening? It is my business to eat him when duly greened and grown, and to order a bottle of the dearest Chablis in honour of his culture in the *restaurant,* on the borders of the *parc.*

Full as cautious, as reticent, as suspicious, is the Norman farmer or farm-labourer. I addressed a gardener at Neuville on the whereabouts of the Camp de Cæsar, or the Cité de Limes. I could get no intelligible answer from him. He stood pensively

lifting his cotton night-cap (a prince of the royal house of Yvetôt, no doubt), and then said,—

"Camp de Cæsar! There's Puys, but it isn't that, is it? and there's (pointing to another direction) Neuville—'tisn't that. Neuville isn't the Camp de Cæsar, is it? Then there's St. Martin l'Eglise; it can't be that. Don't know," he added, giving it up, and assuring me there was no offence in my having asked my way. This poor fellow was civil enough, and had no idea lurking in his mind that I wished to get the better of him in asking my way to the Camp of Cæsar. But he had the indirectness of reply of his *pays*. The nearest approach to an answer he could reach was that the little battling village of Puys was not the ancient Cité de Limes.

So, when I asked the waiter at the Hotel des Victoires whether there was anything to be seen at Yvetôt, he gazed somewhat vacantly in the air, and could not, albeit he was probably born and bred there, discover anything of interest in it. I think he was lost in speculation on the advantage I had come to get out of his native place.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTMAS-TIME IN NORMANDY AND SUSSEX.

THE rapidity with which an international trade in varieties of food is extending itself throughout Europe is surely a fact of happy omen. Parisians will have salad all the year round. This winter it is plentiful in Paris. It is to be seen in the inferior cook-shops. This fresh healthy food comes from the south of France, from Spain, and Algeria. The Parisians, we are told, eat salad annually to the value of £40,000. Immense quantities of poultry reach Paris by railway from Wallachia. Of course, the *gourmets* will not admit for a moment that these strange Wallachian intruders can vie in flavour or tenderness with the capons of la Bresse, or the chickens of Mans or Normandy. People have a natural preference for native produce. But the trade will go on and will extend. It is absolutely neces-

sary in the present condition of the Paris market, as new sources of supply are urgently demanded by London householders, who have to pay the actual market price of poultry. The French have always been great consumers of poultry. They maintain that no birds in the world equal theirs. They look down upon our Dorkings. They spurn the bulky Cochin, and point to their own *crèvecœurs*, and to their Bressannes, Mans, and Barbezieux poultry-yards. They hold that they have for many years been doing for the breed of their poultry of all descriptions that which we have been doing for our oxen, sheep, and pigs. They go so far as to recommend us not to be scouring distant corners of the world for new birds, but to import their best races and adopt their manner of rearing and fattening them for the market. French writers on these subjects, however, generally write with much knowledge of their own products, agricultural and animal, but with little knowledge of ours. They will roundly assert that Paris meat is better than London meat, while every Englishman who has resided in Paris returns home only to say that he has not known what fine meat means since he left England. The Frenchman, in his patriotic anxiety to give his own

country the best of the comparison, elaborates a misleading but telling phrase where he finds a weak point. I find this sentence in a comparative account of the food stocks of London and Paris:—"As for fish, the two capitals have the same fishing-ground, viz., the Channel." Now, this is obviously meant to lead the reader to the conclusion that the mass of the Parisian population—that is, the poorer working class—are as plentifully supplied with fish as the poorer classes of London. Yet nothing could be falser than such an impression. In London, fish abounds in all the poorer neighbourhoods, is the great comfort and cheapest sustenance of the poor. Whereas, in Paris, fish is a veritable luxury, and you never see vast quantities of it for sale in any direction; certainly not upon hawkers' barrows, or piled up in shop windows in the humble neighbourhoods. On the same authority Frenchmen are assured that nowhere are oysters so abundant as in Paris. We may take these little distortions as expressions of an amiable national prejudice. Do we not look down on those Toulouse geese of our markets, and yet do we not continue to import them, and to waste upon their French ribs the rich aroma of British sage and onions? M. Delavergne says that these same Lan-

guedoc geese are the finest that are ever seen in England. Has M. Delavergne seen fair samples of the English goose? At any rate, he will not deny that the French *gourmet* imports his pheasants from England and his grouse from Scotland.

Where M. Husson and others have compared the food of the population of London with that of the population of Paris, they have come—I have no doubt justly—to the conclusion that the Parisian is a much better fed animal than the Cockney. The average Parisian is far better off than the average Londoner. A notable proportion of the population is in the civil or military service of the Crown. Again, the chief business of Paris is to provide luxury and pleasure for successive tides of rich strangers. There are no centres like docks, which attract from afar the unfortunate of all classes. So, I repeat, the average Parisian is much better off than the average Cockney; and I dare say M. Jules Vinçard is not extravagant in estimating the consumption of poultry in the great city of luxury at the rate of 20lb. per inhabitant for the year 1864. He makes out that the consumption of this luxury has been of late years greatly on the increase; that, in short, it has almost doubled since the year 1864.

M. Vinçard being, or having been, a working man himself, does not deduce from his figures the delightful conclusions to which other writers have not scrupled to jump without troubling themselves about facts. He does not say that the Parisian populace eat better meat, better bread, and of a greater variety of dishes than any other populace on the face of the globe. A greater variety of dishes the Parisian undoubtedly has.

May not the stranger as well as the Parisian betake himself to the Hall of the Thousand Columns, and there banquet on three *plats*, to say nothing of a soup and a *hors d'œuvre* and a dessert? The dishes shall include culinary subtleties, and he shall not be denied poultry, and yet he shall pay only 1s. 8d. Nay, these three *plats* and the etceteras are to be had elsewhere for a shilling. In the humblest restaurant you will find almost the same *carte* as in the most pretentious. Fowls are everywhere to begin with. They lie in blistered rows in every *rotisseur's* window. Sorry birds are they, save in the rich neighbourhoods. I am quite sure that no Norman farmer would own them, albeit I have seen some fair examples of what a French fowl may be reduced to before it is cooked, even in this fat province. No,

the Parisian does not eat the best bread, meat, &c., in the world, but he has the greatest variety of food. His palate is more liberal than that of the English working man, who, as a purveyor to the cheap dinners to the working classes of London told me not long since, will not eat hash or *fricassée*.

The Frenchman is ready for any variety of food; and consequently can buy to much better advantage than the London workman, whose range is limited to half-a-dozen articles which may be all dear at the same time.

The difference never struck me more than when, about a fortnight since, I picked up in the shop-window of a Norman market town the manual of *La Bonne Cuisine* for the year 1866. It is a rough little manual, with a coarsely-coloured wrapper, and decorated with a row of copper saucepans, upon which the name is printed—a knife-and-fork almanack. It is sold for 5d., and is meant to be, and is, spread about the little town-ships and villages. I expected to find in it directions for good plain French cookery. It opens with an account of forty-seven soups, with the famous *pot au feu* as a matter of course at the head of them. Over the beloved *pot au feu* the almanack-writer dwells with a loving

hand. The national dish is to be reverently watched, and at the right moment—not a second too early nor a second too late—should an onion, plugged with just one clove, be cast into the murmuring cauldron. There are dozens of vegetables and herbs mentioned in this homely cookery-book as in common use, of which English cooks have never even heard, as scorzonera, skirret, rampions, gourd, salsify, &c. Less variety than is in this humble cookery-book would not satisfy the most moderate French housewife. Each month is ushered in with a few unctuous phrases on its yield to the table luxuries of mankind. Thus the presiding *gourmet* announces that, in February, railway trains and the diligences are gorged with truffled turkeys, *paté de foie gras, terrines,* with delicacies in the flavour of which Strasbourg, Troyes, Lyons, Cahors, and Périgord strive to outrival one another. "The truffles exhale their aroma from Périgord to Paris as the *jours gras* approach; the glory of poultry is at its height; fowls and capons, and geese and ducks are as abundant as they are eagerly sought after." Then we are told that March is the month when fish are in their glory, and when the green and white oysters of Dieppe, of Courseulles, and Cancale make their

triumphant appearance in the *halles*. May opens the door to mackerel and to all sea-fish, to green peas, and to those "amiable young pigeons." Of July we are told "the excellent delicacy of Pontoise veal animates this month." The orange-blossoms are full also, and it is the moment to lay in a supply of them. In August, *bonne chaire* languisheth—man must fain discount the products of winter, and eat the leverets and young rabbits, even the young doves. Veritable infanticides, cries the *gourmet*, while he picks the bones. September is the time for laying in a store of eggs. Those which have been laid between the two Nôtre-Dames—that is between the 5th of August and the 8th of September—keep better than those laid at any other time; at least, so the country idea has been taught hereabouts. With October, the spirits of the *gourmet* revive. Poultry and game crowd his table. "The ox has passed the summer fattening himself; mutton is more succulent: veal, less delicate than in the spring, as nevertheless not to be despised. The pomegranates arrive in Paris."

And then comes December with its rich store of fowl and beast; its capons, turkeys, plovers; its geese and ducks; its venison, wild boar, kid and fawn

—a month of plenty here, as on the British side of the Channel.

"Now," *gourmets* slyly suggest, "is the best time to get people to send you some of the famous pies of Strasbourg, of Toulouse, of Amiens, of Chartres, of Périgord, or of Abbeville; or say some of the *terrines* of Nérac; or, again, any of the delicate *charcuterie* of Italy, Lyons, Troyes, the Touraine, or of Provence; a hamper of Spanish *jambonneaus*, and some of those exquisitely prepared *cuisses d'oie*."

An air of plenty is put on towards the close of the year in a hearty way among these good-cheer loving Normans, as it is put on in our happier country districts. Only the manner is different. The cheer is neither so monotonous nor so heavy. The festival time is the New Year, not Christmas Day. The cider making has been happily terminated, I should say to the very great comfort and satisfaction of all sensitive noses. I should strongly recommend any reader who has not abided in a Norman house while the sheds of apples were being turned into casks of cider, to refrain from giving himself that experience. There are people who cannot bear the odour of a few apples accidentally left in a room. Let these sensitive creatures imagine a house saturated with the sharp

acid odour of whole vats of chopped apples. There is no escape for it in the attics; nay, it travels down the street. Then there are the thuds of the apple-mashing process: the incessant rolling of the tubs; the cooper's hammer at work, tapping from morning till night. But in a Norman house something for the benefit of the family stomach seems to be eternally in progress. The cider is hardly disposed of when a measure or two of fish are taken in hand. The business now is to pickle a great store of them, duly spiced, for Lent. Fruits have been already stored in the dry loft; a portly basket of Neufchâtel cheeses has been deposited in the store closet: everything, in short, is in vastly liberal quantities, and a perpetual hospitality seems to be dispensed. In a house in Normandy, in which I have lived, even the postman would be refreshed with a *petit verre* or some cider. He is a hearty fellow, the Norman, and we feel how much closer he is to us than any other Frenchman. My landlord's country friends, in their market blouses, and with baskets or what not in their hands, were perpetually calling upon him. He had ever in his larder some plump presents from these friends' poultry-yards.

The contrast between a Sussex seaside town, pre-

paring to celebrate Christmas, and a Norman coast town, getting ready for New Year's Day, is extraordinary indeed, when we remember the four hours and a half sea journey which separates them. In the English town, the grocer half fills his window with beds of plums and currants, and garnishes it with candied fruits and a few bars of cinnamon. Some open drums of figs, a few oranges, some tufts of holly, and artfully disposed emblazoned bottles of British wines, complete his attractions. He may, perhaps, defer so far to juvenile taste as to exhibit some boxes of Christmas candles. The greengrocer next door puts forth, in astonishing quantities, his ripest and rarest fruits, and displays a gigantic branch of holly, together with an inexhaustible store of mistletoe. Then there is the butcher. His entire shop-front is loaded with meat. These three tradesmen represent Christmas to the general British mind (with the publican). And when Christmas Day comes, the beef and the pudding are duly eaten (in Sunday clothes), the beer and grog are duly consumed. But, before and after this, the ceremony and sole pleasure of the day, there are dismal blanks of yawning idleness. You see groups of men all over the town in their new white or green smockfrocks, standing

gaping and yawning, and utterly unable to invent any better mode of passing the time than that of occasionally scratching their heads. The extra rest, it may be, is enjoyment enough. But, to the passing observer, there is nothing much more depressing than the appearance of an English village or quiet seaport town on a Christmas Day.

When a Frenchman—be he Norman, or Breton, or Auvergnat—gives himself, or is given, a holiday, he does not stand about with his hands in his pocket, leaning against a wall. When the holiday is a national one he has in his degree the enjoyments of the rich. Just now the winter fairs are holding in the various Norman towns. Rouen has been holding on her outer boulevards that wonderful fair of hers, which seems to be a mile or two in length. At these fairs the country people, as well as the poorer townsfolk, provide themselves with all their little necessaries and ornaments. There is a prodigious sale of showy false jewellery, of Sunday caps, of cheap lace, of fancy baskets, of toys (most of which are far superior to ours), of cheap clocks, stationery, caps, blouses, common china, lamps, and linen. Then there are the great gambling stalls for gingerbread, crockery ornaments, &c.; where the country

bumpkins stand open-mouthed, and risk sou after sou, in the hope of a *gros lot*. There are always one or two good confectioner's stalls, where a wonderful variety of elegant as well as common sweetmeats are offered for sale. The most refined of these will not astonish the commonest fisherman; and his taste is not too coarse for the delicate *gaufrès* that are ever cooking at the open-air oven in front of the fair. At this fair the people provide themselves with the *etrennes* which they are bound to distribute on New Year's Day. There is a gaiety, a holiday look all over the town. People go about not with that constrained, formal look which it is said the Englishman always wears when he is made up for a holiday, but as free merry-makers.

On New Year's Day everybody will be abroad early in holiday attire. None will be found lounging against a post or a wall. The poor as well as the rich will make calls and interchange gracious courtesies. The whole town, indeed, will have a happy sparkling look, and will be gay with flags; and the people will meet in the evening and have joyous dances together. It is not only so much eating and drinking in the middle of the day—a due consumption of beef and pudding and then an end of the

feast. In all the villages there will be merry dances enough in the great room of the country inn, or if that be too small, in a convenient barn. There will be cheery talk and games, and laughter throughout the day; and there will be fair feasting. The shop windows will be crowded with wonderful samples of the confectioner's art—with satin bags of sweetmeats and great *bâtons* of the sugar for which Rouen is so celebrated. The bookseller will make a great display of gorgeous covers of gift books, and the people in the early day will promenade the streets in crowds, laughing, and chatting, and greeting one another. The little Sussex sea-port town will eat and sleep through Christmas day, and through New Year's day; the little Norman seaport will laugh and dance and make merry.

CHAPTER IX.

FOOD EXHIBITIONS.

1866.

THE food exhibitions with which England and France close the year express to some extent the respective characters of the two races. In England, we have the Smithfield Club Cattle Show, where prize beef and mutton are submitted to the admiring gaze of Englishmen. France shows her fat cattle at Poissy, in Carnival time. This year there was a great show of Charolais oxen and cross-breeds at Nevers. In Paris there is the great exhibition of poultry of all descriptions, and of cheeses. In this exhibition Normandy, it need hardly be observed, makes a great figure, contributing a liberal share, as she does, to the New Year dinners of Paris. But Paris cannot be supplied with birds by any one province. Her capons and fat chickens come chiefly from the Sarthe and the Calvados. Toulouse, le

Mans, Mortagne, and Strasbourg send her geese. Her pigeons are from the Oise, the Somme, the Pas de Calais, and the Nord. Her ducks are from the Loire Inférieure, the Sarthe, Seine et Oise, the Indres et Loire, the Eure, and the Loiret. A large proportion of her turkeys is from the Cher, the Aube, the Indres et Loire, the Loiret, and the Seine et Marne, and six or seven departments rear and fatten fowls for her. At the exhibition of last Christmas were Rouen ducks, fine Norman fowls, delicate Neufchâtel cheeses, pitted against the poultry and the cheeses of other departments of France.

A word or two beforehand on the manner in which poultry reaches the Paris consumer. Before the year 1848 all poultry and game passed through the market of La Vallée, where they were subjected to an *ad valorem* duty of 10 per cent. In this year, however, a new decree, while it maintained the old duty on all birds brought into the market, raised a differential duty on all birds sent direct to the consumer or the retailer. This tax amounted to 15 per cent. on geese, turkeys, and rabbits; and it was applied, moreover, to lamb and kid. Other descriptions of game or poultry were subjected to a tax of 30 per cent. on their value. The city tax on poultry

and game alone, from 1840 to 1860, reached nearly one million sterling. We are told that not more than 1-20th part of the poultry and game sent to Paris is sent by producers. It is forwarded by wholesale buyers. There are eight legalised poultry salesmen, who are appointed by the Prefecture of Police. It is they who have the privilege of conducting all sales, and they have the right of levying a duty of 1 per cent. on all sales. It appears they have other rights—to empty cases, &c. In short, one of these posts is worth £600 a year. The reader may easily imagine that when the profit of the country wholesale dealer, the city tax, the salesman's tax, and the profit of the retail dealer have been duly paid upon a pair of fowls, their price has been considerably increased since they left the farmyard. In the case of a turkey, add truffles to the score, and payment for the skill of Potel and Chabot, and a purchaser must be prepared to open his purse wide as it will stretch. Last year Paris consumed nearly 14,000,000 heads of poultry and game, even loaded as every head was with taxes and profits. If poultry can be reared on a great scale at a marketable price for an encumbered market like that of La Vallée, in the north and north-west of France, surely these

good Normans and brave men of Picardy could grow poultry for the British market with great profit to themselves and advantage to us!

Before making the round of the stalls where the produce of French and foreign dairies and French poultry-yards were daintily set out, I will take a general view of the extent of this interesting exhibition. It is especially interesting to Englishmen, including as it does, many breeds of poultry of which he has scarcely ever heard, and very many varieties of cheese which have never found their way into the English market. In this great show Normandy is not confounded with other provinces. Here will be found sixteen lots or groups of Norman poultry, to say nothing of the famous cheeses of Neufchatel, the produce of the fertile Norman valleys.

The visitor on entering the exhibition cannot but be struck by the varieties, not so much of the poultry as of the cheeses. To the cheese department the visitor may, indeed, be led by his nose. He who knows his Paris well must have been very often unpleasantly struck by the now faint, now pungent, and now overpowering perfumes which steal upon him at times from the doorways of the dealers in *comestibles*. Each cheese has its particular aroma. There

are cheeses of the Gallic dairy which are strong enough to take away the breath of the uninitiated. Roquefort is trying, Gruyère wants resolution, but I mind me of a cheese, of the circumference of a sun-flower —in colour, glowing as the setting sun—that has strength in it to pale the cheek of the bravest. Here we encounter them all, with German cheeses, and Swiss cheeses, and Italian cheeses, and, though last, most assuredly not least, British cheeses. France has buckled on her armour for the contest; noble agriculturists, dukes, and barons, and counts are in the lists. The Trappists send their cheese; the Grand Duke of Baden takes up the cause of German cheeses, with the Chevalier de Raab from Austria, the Baron de Streit from Saxony, the Baron von Troschke from Prussia, and the Baron Verschner from Holland. So the humble Dutch cheese of our kitchens has its noble supporter. It is whispered that the cheeses of Eurstenflagger are the favourite cheeses of the royal Prussian table. The great of the earth are met to fight the battle of casein. The importance of cheese, not so much as a delicacy accompanying dessert, or giving zest to the wine, but as the caseous or cheesy element in the diet of the working classes of most European States will be at

once obvious to all who are in any degree familiar with those races with whom M. Leplay has dealt in his great statistical work—a work that had been invaluable, had its statistics been accompanied with the results of personal observation.

There were fifty-seven foreign exhibitors of cheese in this exhibition. The countries represented include Holland, Switzerland, Prussia, Bavaria, Italy, Saxony, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, Belgium, and England. The dairies of France were represented by 189 exhibitors, the cheeses being divided naturally into the fresh and the salted. The varieties of cheese appear to be almost infinite, the differences of flavour often imperceptible, except to the highly-educated palate. There is, if I am not mistaken, an English barrister, who, to his forensic fame, has added that of being the best judge of Stilton in the three kingdoms. When this redoubtable critic presses the threshold of Cadbury, he enters the realm of which he is sovereign judge. I can only hope that this lord of casein is in these odorous galleries, to keep guard over the fame of his beloved Stilton, and give it the victory over Roquefort.

It may be said, I think confidently, that the soft, mild, almost liquid cheese *le Brie* is the most popular

cheese in France. It has the position which Cheshire cheese (or Chester cheese, as our neighbours will call it), occupies in England. Cambrubert is its rival, but *le Brie* has the advantage in oiliness and lightness. Follows that pride of all, Aveyron, wrought from the mingled milk of goat and sheep, the sharp and pungent Roquefort. Gruyère (both French and Swiss), comes next in rank. The French imitation of the old Swiss cheese is so good, that few *gourmets* can distinguish one from the other. They are distinguishable, however, with a knife. The Swiss cheese weeps salt tears as it is cut, whereas the French imitation is perfectly dry. Among the French cheeses, one new to the Parisians, is the blue cheese. The Neufchâtel cheeses are in variety—the Angelots, the Chevrotin, the Persille, the blue, the Torne-Grasse, &c. The great variety of French cheeses on the tables, include those of Gerardmer, of Port-du-Salut, of Livarot, of Evry, of Saint-Marcellin, of Peigney, of Langres, of Olivet, of Cantale, of Coulommiers, of Mont-d'Or (a most odorous variety), of Thollot, &c. M. Charles de Limelle maintains that the Port-du-Salut cheese made by the monks (and of which they sell annually not less than 80,000 lbs.), is the king of cheeses,

being without smell; in fact, being like very rich butter. The monks appear to be the *gourmet's* best friends.

And now let us pass to the poultry—to the fat pullets of the Pays de Caux, and to those of Rennes, which were famous in Madame de Sévigne's time—a cruel time; for then fowls were fattened by being shut up in narrow cages and having their eyes destroyed. There are 43 groups of capons and 37 of fat pullets from La Bresse. These have been fattened in the departments of l'Ain and Saone-et-Loire. Fifteen groups of capons and 62 of fat pullets have been sent from the department of Le Sarthe. The Houdan race is represented in 31 groups, from the departments of the Eure-et-Loir and the Seine-et-Oise. Of the renowned Crévecoeurs there are 15 groups, some from the Calvados. Then there are some 50 groups of Dorkings, Caussades, Solognotes, Brahmas, &c. There are in all 67 groups of turkeys —those birds that are said to be *veritable manger du roi*, and which three centuries ago were a rich gift to a king. Amiens and Caen appear to have been first famous for rearing these delicate birds from the West Indies. Then come the ducks in two categories, viz., ducks fattened to be eaten, and ducks treated for the

formation of *foie gras*. Without entering into the question whether or not it was the celebrated cook Gand who invented the duck pies of Amiens, I may say that, at any rate, Amiens has retained her fame down to the present time for the delicacy of her ducks, while those of Rouen unquestionably have the advantage in the not unimportant point of size. The geese are divided into categories, like the ducks. There are 52 groups of geese fattened for the table, and only two of those treated for fat liver.

These are the glory of La Beauce and Languedoc, as they were in the days of the ancient Romans, who were not strangers to the cruel art of producing *foie gras*. It was the Jews of Metz and Strasbourg, however, who originated *foie gras* in modern times. The list of the contents of the exhibition concludes with 16 groups of pigeons and 8 of guinea-fowl.

It was impossible, while trudging through this exhibition of fowls, and turkeys, and geese, and cheese, within a day or two of Christmas-day, not to be struck with the extraordinary difference (to which, by the way, I have already alluded) between not only the character of the English and French Christmas exhibitions of dead stock, but also between the tone and manners of the peoples at the two exhibitions.

There is not the least shouting or crowding, or "chaffing," inside or outside the Palais de l'Industrie. The bucolic specimens of humanity that reach Paris with the poultry and the cheese are heavy and uncouth, and as eccentric as you please, in dress. But they are quiet, and perfectly sober. No vast network of public-houses is spread for them. The daintiest ladies are safe and quiet in the exhibition galleries. There is no yelling crowd of cabmen and touting conductors outside the building. The exhibition, in short, is not an opportunity for rowdyism and drunkenness. We know the scene that is played all day long—and with new zest after nightfall—round about our own great Christmas Cattle Show.

CHAPTER X.

EN ROUTE FOR BRITTANY.

BUTTER, and eggs, and fruit, these are the articles of food which we gather from the valley of the Seine—from Normandy indeed, and from Brittany, from Cherbourg and Rennes, &c. Brittany makes notable contributions to the food exports from Norman ports; Brittany is being rapidly brought within the radius of scientific agriculture. Waste lands are being got under cultivation; the value of land in some cantons has almost doubled within the last thirty or forty years, so that now in some favoured districts a hectare (2½ acres) of land is worth even so much as £8 per annum. The simple Breton peasant is learning the value of marine and other manures. His crops are improving, and by the seaboard he is growing rich crops of cereals and vegetables; while in some parts, large quantities of potatoes are pro-

duced, alternated with wheat and barley. The crops of Brittany now include clover, carrots, parsnips, cabbages, turnips, and food for cattle. This improved cultivation has enabled the farmers to rear more cattle and breed more horses. The Breton has lost many of his patriarchal and simple ways, in the gradual transformation of his beloved province. In the days of his simplicity, not many years ago, he was to be seen barefooted, his body hardly covered with coarse linen, carrying his produce to market upon unhooped wheels and frail wooden springs, and along roads that looked impassable. There was a certain nobility, and a right intelligence in the old Breton then. I am told that the civilisation which has penetrated into his farmyard, has led him also into habits of intoxication. Learning to plough and to manure, he has learned to drink. This is no reason why we should lament the progress in knowledge he has made. It has brought to him and his, new comforts, and will bring him more, while at the same time it will enrich greatly the general stock of food. It is curious to watch the tenacity with which the Breton proprietor clings to old customs, and sets up his little barrier against encroachments, yielding his ground only step by step. The civil code of the Revolution divided

every man's land equally among his children. The Breton peasant still fights against this law, by appointing an eldest child, or a child who shall inherit all the real property. This is done by an agreement or gift to the eldest, made to him during the lifetime of his father. The other children get their share in money. The inheritor of the real estate—of the farm and the land, the cattle and the ploughs—covenants often, only by word of mouth, to be a father to his brothers and sisters, to bring up the younger children, and provide for them food and board, and clothing and education, until their majority, or until their marriage. To these the old paternal roof is always a refuge and a shelter, where they may ever get a bed and a spoon. Wherever this custom of keeping the land together has prevailed in Brittany, it has, it is said, been of advantage to the productive power of the land. The cantons of Blongastel, Rosporden, Donarnenez, Pont Croix, and the arrondissement of Châteaulain, give evidence of the salutary effect of leaving one son to continue the traditions of the family, to hold the few hectares of land together, on condition that he yields to his brothers and sisters protection and support, and their share in money or otherwise out of the general estate. This *régime* has

kept generations of small Breton proprietors tilling the same fields, son after father, for centuries. Such cultivators, who have inherited agricultural traditions from their ancestors, are hard to move on the road of progress. M. A. du Chatellier has described some experience of his with a good flourishing example of one of these old Breton farmers. The old Breton could boast an income of between £400 and £500 a year, which he had slaved to get together. Yet he went forth every morning in the midst of his servants, having, like them, a lump of black bread in his pocket for his early meal. He was an intelligent old farmer, albeit wedded to the agricultural usages of his canton. He had sent his son, however, to learn scientific farming. The son became a distinguished pupil, and, on his return to his father, prevailed upon him, after much difficulty, to substitute a new iron plough for the old barbarous one of the country. Unfortunately, the new plough broke against a big stone in its first furrow. The old Breton thereupon cast it aside, and vowed ever afterwards that no iron plough could possibly be worth a good old wooden one.

Yet events will be stronger than this old Breton, wedded to his wooden plough. The price of land is increasing, and better cultivation must be spread, to

enable the cultivator to pay the increased rents. That this better cultivation is spreading may be gathered, from the fact that four or five years ago an agricultural implement maker at Rennes, one M. Bodin, was making between two and three thousand agricultural machines per annum for the five departments of Brittany and the Manche. I have said that drunkenness has spread of late years among the agricultural population of Brittany. I should add, however, that in many places drunken farmers, who could only get a miserable subsistence out of the land they held at very low rents, have faded out, and that the same land on which they could live only miserably, is now, albeit the rent is doubled, and in some instances trebled, supporting in ease and prosperity new cultivators who have adopted modern improvements. Again, the extent of land under cultivation is in some districts increased by a tenth, and in others by a fifth. The great need of Brittany is the infusion of capital into her agriculture. The Breton peasant is isolated from townspeople by his language. He has kept himself apart, and mistrusts the outer world. His fare is—I am speaking of the labourer of the old school—black bread made of buckwheat, or rye, or oats, or barley, or boiled as a porridge with milk. If

he have a change in his diet, it is in the shape of potatoes. His life is an unbroken monotony. He never changes his manners, his habits, or his dress. He is a stranger in the market town; where even his language is not understood, save by a few who deal with him. He is as patient and as quiet as a beast of burden, and his daily hard labour appears to regulate and subdue even his affections. It leaves him no time for grief, no hours for the indulgence of remorse, no moment for despair. The man who ploughs his mother earth from dawn to dusk, does not die of love or grief. The hard terms on which he eats his daily bread, leave him no time, save for work and rest. A Breton landlord has described the wife of a Breton labourer, who, by dint of her own hard labour and his, had been able to take a little farm. In the little homestead the husband fell ill, and for nine days the disconsolate woman wept on her knees at the death-bed of him who had been the companion of her life and labours. He died, and she bore him to the field of rest. On the morrow she was—fate would have it so—working in the fields. Ten months afterwards—the legal term of widowhood just expired—she married again in order to keep the little farm together. The farm and her children were her only care. Another

widow, old and scrofulous, left with four young children in a farm, called on her landlord to know whether he wished her to marry again, for she had several offers from workmen who had fair sums of money. So marriage is a complete matter of business in a Breton village. It brings something to the farm that has been in the family for perhaps a hundred years. It enables another to take a little farm.

The greed for money is as strong in these Breton villages as it is in Paris *salons*, where the *dot* is the game pursued. Breton labourers will travel from village to village in search of a spouse, showing a goodly number of crowns in their possession—the crowns all the time being often only borrowed for the deception of some heiress in sabots. The relations of parents and children soon become mercenary also. Directly the son is old enough to work, he either receives wages from his father to his satisfaction, or goes forth to find a more generous master. The same rule applies to the daughters. Hence springs an independence in Breton family relations which weakens the tie of blood; so that you will find the younger branches of a family in comfortable circumstances while the parents are sunk in poverty.

The hard labour which the soil demands brings this about. Labour is the Breton's only wealth. Thus, when an old couple who have worked a farm through their lusty time have no more strength to give the land, and their children have grown up with the full strength of their youth about them, the old people have to give way. They execute what they call their *démission*. By their *démission* they give up to the strong the farm, with all its stock and implements, and receive in return a small pension, a pittance, a room in the farm-house, perhaps the produce of a cow, and a seat at the humble board, a little flax and linen, and a pound or two of tobacco. And then, if the old people live long, they find that they are a burden upon the new generation, and they are maltreated and neglected. A third generation is coming up under the thatch, and they who are sowing the buckwheat, the rye, and the flax, grumble at the folk who bore them, and would gladly put them in the field of rest with their humble forefathers.

The work seems to have taken all sentiment and imagination out of them. They are its slave, as they are the slave of the priest, and never question whether that which has gone before is right or wrong. They inherit the superstitions of their race, and trans-

mit them with fidelity. And the son lights his fire on the *fête* of St. John, as his forefathers did, and as his grandchildren will, he believes. He will bathe his horse with water from the fountain he deems sacred at St. Eloi, and believe that henceforth steed and rider are safe from precipice or fall. He even counts his money, not in francs but in crowns, and five sous make a real to him, as they have made since the time when the Spaniards occupied part of his country. He is faithful to traditions even in his intemperate habits, it would seem. The only relief from the monotony of his hard-worked days is that which his father and his grandfather had before him, namely, drink. Both sexes are addicted to this pernicious vice, and from the earliest age. It is fiercest, it is most general, in the department of Finistère, where the average annual consumption seems to be about thirty litres for each inhabitant. The increase in the consumption of spirits in this department has been 300 per cent. in thirty years. The sin is of old date, and the increase of wealth among some of the Breton farmers has down to this time only aggravated it. But education must come in the wake of the agricultural improvements, and with it will come a decrease in that intemperance of the Breton for

which he was reproved even in one of Madame de Sevigné's letters. It is terrible, indeed, when drunken children are to be seen about a country.—

The most extraordinary part of a traveller's observations in Brittany is that which is directed to the curious laws and customs of land tenure, and to the peculiar adjustments which have been made from time to time between capital and labour, between landlord and tenant. The vast number of small holdings or properties, the labourers' farms, the *gagistes*, and their manner of working and of being paid, are points of extraordinary interest to an Englishman, not only because they are utterly dissimilar to our agricultural system, but because being dissimilar they are yet, as far as the Bretons themselves are concerned, productive of a progressive prosperity.

There is a course of agricultural instruction through which every Breton boy and girl born in the country must pass. Whether the parents of the child be proprietors of their own patch of land, or tenants, or sub-tenants, the children begin by being hired out as *gagistes*, or hirelings, either by their own parents or by some neighbouring farmer. This beginning is made between the ages of twelve and fourteen. The

Breton child receives at first his board and some clothes, one or two pairs of sabots, and six, seven, or eight crowns, according to his strength. As he advances from his fifteenth to his eighteenth year his wages are slightly increased. He is more immediately interested in the economy of the farm. He is permitted to buy one or two beasts or heads of cattle with his savings, and to put them with the farm cattle. He generally selects two young cows or oxen. In this way he is led to have a direct interest in the cattle, and in the economy of the stables and cow-sheds. Presently a little patch of land is put apart for him in the midst of his master's farm, and he sows a crop of potatoes in it or other vegetables. He is now a little farmer on an infinitesimal scale. His self-interest is excited. He has the means of working his way forward by thrift and industry. He is accumulating the tools of his trade while he is learning it. It would seem that few Breton boys take the full advantage which this system offers them. They seldom stay throughout their apprenticeship with one master. They are fond of going to fairs, and, in a word, of dissipation. But in spite of these drawbacks to their prosperity, they generally manage by the time they have reached

their twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth year to have saved some £10 or £20. Before they have reached this latter age they have had their wages gradually raised from a few crowns a year to £10, with a very great increase of their privileges in the way of cultivating land and rearing cattle. By this simple system, which gives the farm-boy early and strong interest in his work, he finds himself able, with common rectitude and prudence, to take to himself a wife of his own condition, who shall have been a *gagiste* also, and have put her proper number of crowns by for her wedding-day. Once married, he either arranges for the couple to continue as farm-labourers on progressive terms, or he gets what is called in his language a *penty*, which means a little house, with a yard and a patch of land, belonging to some large farm. He has enough land for one or two cows, one or two head of cattle, a crop of hemp, and a few bushels of corn. He will get a *pied-a-terre* of this kind at from £8 up to £25 per annum, according to its advantages and extent.

Let the reader now observe how this Stephan of ancient Brittany has well considered his start; or how, to be quite just, his ancestors considered it generations before him. He has the beginning of a

farm, which he can carry on and increase, with the aid of his wife, without foreign help, which he has not yet the capital to buy. I should observe that the farmer of whom he rents his place is invariably bound by the agreement to plough that part of Stephan's land which Stephan does not reserve for hand cultivation or for his cattle. So that the beginner has no necessity for carts or horses, or oxen, or a plough. It now only remains for him to work hard, to be content with his black bread and his milk, and to wait so many fruitful seasons. In due time he will amass enough capital to buy a plough and oxen to yoke to it, and a horse and cart. £60 or £80 will do this. When he has done this, he has accumulated enough by his labour to provide employment, and at the same time to secure sustenance to his family as it grows. He has established himself as a farmer. From this point he may proceed, if he have good fortune, and a sagacious and prudent head, to be a *domanier*, having authority over a large extent of land, and of tenures like the *penty* with which he began. These domains are of various extent, so that they are adapted to the small as well as to the large capitalist. It is said that as a *domanier*, which is a speculative business, the Breton

agriculturist seldom makes a mistake, and generally contrives to get heavy interest for his savings. This is the rise of the Breton peasant who remains wedded to the ancient customs of his province, and to the traditions of what is called the *domaine congéable.*

In the northern part of Finistère labour is carried on by an association of families—the father and his married children all working in common together, and taking a regulated share of the produce each. This system, however, seems to work unsatisfactorily in this: that the younger branches of the association become unjust to the elders, and begrudge them their share, so that the old people suffer like the *démissionaires.* The *régime* of this northern corner of Brittany has this vice in it, that it leaves no career open to the labourer. He remains a simple hireling. He has neither cattle nor patch of land, neither flax nor hemp. He becomes as a town labourer, a worker in the docks at Brest.

It is Brittany whence our working population get such quantities of those cheap eggs which are sold in the populous quarters of London. Hundreds of tons were carried from Rennes last year into London at 50s. a ton, as they were from Cherbourg. They are the produce of a province where every peasant can

get his patch of land and own his one or two head of cattle.

In this command of a little land, which the French agriculturist has, lies the essential difference between his condition and that of the agricultural labourer of England. It is strange to note the contrast between English and French agricultural writers on this subject. We are for high farming—farming on a grand scale, or, for "agricultural manufacturing" as a French writer has called it. Whereas even considerable French landlords, like M. de Chatellier, dwell incessantly on the benefits, not only to agricultural labourers but the community at large, of small farms cultivated by men who themselves work in the fields. He dwells with pity on the English system, which, he says, has taken nearly every patch of land from the agricultural labourer and reduced him to misery; and opposes to it the Breton farmer, with his few hectares, his granary, his stables and his orchard. He does not deny that the march of improvement may presently interfere with this small farming, nor that science may get much more out of the soil than even the best instructed Breton peasant now gets out of it. Speaking from close observation, however, he tell us that the small farmers are progressing admira-

bly; that the fear of agricultural machine-breaking has passed away; and that year after year the rural population are becoming more passionately attached to their native soil. To this increasing prosperity which pervades agricultural Brittany, then, we may look for a gradually increasing supply through the Norman ports to our egg, butter, and fruit markets. The description of cultivation which I have given is particularly well adapted to the production of these articles of food; and Brittany will become more and more interesting to the agricultural theorist as its resources are developed, by the thousands of little long-haired farmers to whose hands its fertility is confided.

But they move slowly—very slowly.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM PARIS TO RENNES.

At the Railway Station on the Boulevart Montparnasse, he who is about to penetrate Brittany, and make acquaintance with its legends and its primitive customs, to wander about its old towns, mark its ancient battle-grounds, or inquire into the present condition of its commerce and its agriculture; sees that he is on the right road. At the pay-place he encounters short-waisted and voluminously-capped women, in the company of spare leather-featured, quick-mannered men in jackets and felt hats of liberal proportions. There is much kissing and infinite chattering. Bretons established in Paris are taking leave of country cousins who have been staying with them, with vehement kissing on both cheeks; the said cousins being on the point of returning to their fields and orchards, there to labour con-

tentedly, carrying forward from their fathers to their children, the legends of their hill-sides and of their valleys, together with the ancient superstitions of their race. Generations of them have believed in the power of St. Mathurin de Moncontour." "He might have been God Almighty," a Breton peasant will seriously tell you, "only he found it would have been too much trouble," and he is very happy to wear a little leaden image of the Saint at his button-hole at Pentecost. It comforts him, and gives him a sense that he is supernaturally protected. How they plod on from generation to generation, these light-hearted Bretons, living and dying exactly like their forefathers; or, if moved to some little improvement, turning slowly and with reluctance and difficulty from the old path. For how many generations have not the Lamballais been the navigators—the navvies, the delvers of Brittany; the pioneers of the ducal armies of old; so that in these days, a digger or worker in earth of any kind, is called a Lamballais. The builders of the lath and mud houses or cottages round Rennes, albeit most of them have never seen Lamballe, are Lamballais.

The railway passes through flat marshy country, lined with straight roads and flanked with low under-

grown trees. There are no rich swelling lands, no evidences of high farming or of noble cattle, to greet the eye. Yet our first station of importance is Rambouillet. By Rambouillet, the landscape improves a little. We are in the neighbourhood of its vast forest, that stretches beyond the park laid out by Le Nôtre. It was in this park that Louis XVI. founded his establishment for the improvement in the breed of sheep, and located his *merinos* from Spain. It is a busy place now, dealing in sheep, and wool, and corn, and flour, and wood. It has its place in history, moreover. You may see in its ancient horse-shoe shaped castle the chamber where Francis I. died, and it was the first stage of silly King Charles the Tenth's progress to exile.

The railway stretches still towards Brittany over flat uninteresting land—much of it in small patches of ploughed land dotted with apple trees, and intersected with poplar-skirted roads. The guard calls "Maintenon!" This was the place from which Scarron's widow took her name. The Duc de Noailles' splendid chateau hard by—a chateau the foundations of which date back to Philip Augustus—was the property of Madame de Maintenon, and is still embellished by her portrait by Mignard. We pass on to

Chartres, the granary of the Beauce. The railway still passing over broad, apparently interminable plains of well-cultivated fertile land. These plains of the Beauce are of immense extent, and are renowned for their corn crops. They form half the department of the Eure-et-Loire, and part of that of Loire-et-Cher. The Beauce includes several large towns, as Bretigny, and Bonneval, but Chartres is its chief town, its *entrepôt*; and here the traveller may test the excellence of the Beauce corn in the shape of the celebrated Chartres pies, which he will find at the *buffet*.

The railway still keeps over flat country. The land is in most places thrown up in ridges, and everywhere, where there is a dimple in the flat,—is water. The trees are all stunted and awry, with trunks in strange contortions. The villages and little stations are many, and the babble at each where the train picks up groups of county folk, is great. We pass through the Nogent that is celebrated for its fine cray-fish, and Courville, near which—in the ancient gothic chateau—Sully died. The country, albeit not picturesque, is dotted with comfortable cottages.

Le Mans is a thriving commercial place—the

capital of the department of La Sarthe. Like most provincial towns, it is undergoing radical changes. The new parts of it are spacious, and the new streets and houses are exactly like those which are in course of erection in nearly every French provincial town. There is a tendency to Boulevardise. On the market-place there are one or two flashy cafés covered with gilding after the Parisian fashion, which look extremely ridiculous planted amid the ordinary rough, I may truthfully add, and dirty restaurants of the place. That Le Mans is a flourishing place, and that it is the centre of a great manufacturing district, are soon obvious to the visitor. Not far from the railway station there is a permanent Agricultural Implement Exhibition, intended for the benefit of the farmers of La Sarthe. It consisted of rows of ploughs, and rakes, and chaff-cutters, and other agricultural implements of improved plan and make; but there was an air of neglect and failure about the place. The implements were thrown together in confusion, and not a soul was to be seen in yard or sheds. Whether the farmers of the Sarthe be of an adventurous or improving turn or not, at any rate they contrive to give a sprightly, flourishing aspect to the picturesque city, built upon the steep slope

that rises from the meeting of the rivers Sarthe and Huisne. Strolling up towards the Place aux Halles, I passed vast grain and hay dépôts. The flour salesmen were many, and I noticed guano depôts. The chief books in the booksellers' windows were "The Perfect Gardener," "Le Bon Fermier," and rows of the "Bibliothèque des Cultivateurs."

There was a bucolic air about the Place aux Halles. The little cafés with their green fronts were meant for country market-folk. They bore such seductive signs as "The Café de la Gaité," "The Café of the Bridge of Arcole." A French country market town, when it is not market-day, is not as a rule a very lively place to saunter about for many hours, after you have done the central place, walked round the Cathedral, examined the Prefecture with its fresh gilt railings, and looked at the little museum and library, you have generally had enough of it. The ill-paved streets almost break your ancles. The dullness of the by-streets with their unbroken lengths of yellow wall, the weary, resigned air of the old women spinning at the windows (who have just energy enough to look up at you and drop their eyes again), the lounging soldiers, the shabby little officer's café, the corporal's party carrying the meat and

vegetables from the market to the barracks, and a mournful priest or two, and in one corner of the town a shabby flaunting canvas of some strolling troop:—These things are wearying to the traveller's spirits. Le Mans has industrial life about it, however. It has linen manufactories. You meet women wheeling coarse linen through the streets in barrows. In Le Mans are carried on great dealings in wax, honey, cattle, and poultry. Is not Le Mans celebrated for its capons? Some enterprising folk of Le Mans, moreover, are building immense store-houses opposite the railway station, and have called them docks! Why a lofty series of store-houses built opposite a railway station should be called docks, I cannot imagine, and I am sure the proprietors of the said store-houses could not enlighten me.

I have said that much of this great country market-town was in the hands of the builders. There is a suburb of it—that fronting and overlooking the river from a height—which commands a fine view of the surrounding well-cultivated landscape, and the fine market gardens, which I believe are the boast of this part of the country. This suburb is entirely one of the merchant's quarters. When a French

flourishing business man takes to building, and to building rather rustically, he generally contrives to produce a structure of extraordinary aspect. Sometimes he will do an over-coloured and extravagant imitation of a Swiss châlet, with a Chinese pagoda, propped on the top of the garden wall for a summer-house. Or he will indulge in many-coloured bricks, and much wild ornamentation in the shape of flower-vases, and stained glass. I think, however, the most fantastic country house I have ever seen, and I am acquainted with those of Passy, and Ville d'Avray, and Asnierès, &c., &c., was one I saw on the terrace at Le Mans. It was a folly on a large scale. A glittering dome glazed with stained glass of all colours, rose out of the roof and looked like a gigantic diadem in the sun. On the roof or crowning the walls, were large flower-vases with shabby plants in them. But the appearance of the entire huge toy defies description. I can only say that although I was alone, when the vision broke upon me I laughed outright. A Frenchman must bring his taste to bear upon nature. Some day he will trim the petals of the rose, and some Pivert will bring his taste to bear on the perfection of the perfume of the violet. I know nothing much more wearying to an Englishman's sight than

a French garden, nor anything less enjoyable than a Le Nôtre park, with men waiting like footmen under the trees, and hastily gathering every leaf which they shed.

There is a comfort in Mans, however. It is on no traveller's—no excursionist's high road. 'No groups wander up the centre of its streets—ballad singer fashion, with their Murray in hand. Even at the little hotels opposite the railway station, the art of charging Paris prices for bad imitations of Paris *plats*, has not been mastered. I took my mid-day meal, which in these parts is dinner at one of these railway inns; I partook of three or four excellent dishes. I had a dessert afterwards, including some of the now renowned Camembert cheese. The host served me a bottle of his best Bergerac, and my bill was half-a-crown,—three francs! Before I left the town, I lingered at one of its *octroi* gates for a moment, and saw what a trouble and hindrance this same *octroi* must be to the farmers and the manufacturers; and moreover, what a heavy tax upon the food and fuel of the townsfolk. At the town gates of Mans, a hectolitre of wine pays three francs and a half; of beer, five francs. The ox that passes within the *octroi* gate, pays two francs thirty centimes for every 200

pounds of his bulk, while calves pay five francs, and sheep and kids pay three francs sixty centimes, and pigs and boars pay four francs twenty centimes. Beef in the carcase pays five francs per 200 pounds; veal, eight francs; and mutton, lamb, and kid, six francs. Cod and stock-fish are exempt from all taxation, while salmon and turbot pay twopence a pound at the town gates. Twopence is levied on every lobster, or cray-fish, or *langouste*, and on every hundred oysters. Hay, and straw, and firewood, coke, coal, and char-coal, are all taxed; only the gleanings of the poor being exempt. Timber for building and for cabinet-work, props and perches, even old building-materials, bricks, tiles, lime, cement,—all are taxed.

As I travelled from Le Mans to Rennes and entered the department of Ille-et-Vilaine, I noticed many poor villages of lath and mud cottages in a dilapi-dated condition. We were in Brittany—the ancient Armorica;—among that laborious, quaint, and primi-tive race, that cling to their ancient traditions, and look sulkily on at the changes which are slowly penetrating their ancient province.

The Bretons, and especially those of the west—of Finisterre, for example, appear to be taking most kindly to the modern art of drinking. It has been

said that Finisterre is the most drunken department of the French empire. While my supper was preparing at the hôtel on my arrival at Rennes, I amused myself with the departmental paper. The first paragraph that caught my eye, was the description of an accident that had just happened near the city. A farmer returning home drunk, had missed his footing on a bridge that crossed a rapid stream, and been drowned. It appeared that there was no railing or *garde-fous* to the bridge, which there certainly should be in a land of topers.

In another part of the paper was an excellent letter from some local correspondent, on the past and present condition of agriculture in Brittany. He looked back to the days when he paid twenty-five centimes, or twopence halfpenny for a dozen eggs, and fivepence for a fowl. In the autumn of 1857, this was the price for a single egg at Dieppe. Observe, that this lament of the Ille-et-Vilaine paper, proceeded from a correspondent dwelling in this ancient city, whence enormous quantities of eggs and butter are exported to England, and where, therefore, these articles are cheapest. The correspondent in question having dwelt on the ever-increasing market open to Breton cultivators, prayed them to improve their methods of

agriculture, to take advantage of the knowledge science has given to the farmer, to buy new implements, and to invest in manure. He ended very sensibly, by telling the Breton farmers that the only way in which they could meet the rise in rent and wages, was by becoming better farmers.

It is understood that French farmers are grumbling everywhere. There can be no longer any doubt about the distress which overspreads the agriculture of France. It is admitted, in the *Livre Bleu*. It is proved by the National Inquiry which the Emperor announced in his speech from the throne. It is undoubtedly fortunate, as M. Henri Baudrillart, lately observed in the *Journal des Dèbats*, that these are times when the sufferings of the shepherd and the ploughboy, of the young urchins who tend geese and turkeys along lanes and over waste lands, do not pass unnoticed. There have been times when the poor country people have been swept by famine from the face of the land by hundreds. No learned inquiries were instituted in those days. Village churchyards were choked with the dead. The black cloth was never unhooked from the church porch; and yet no speech of sympathy came from the throne, no hand of help was stretched forth by Government.

Yes; these are better times. Years of wild speculation and Bourse gambling in Paris, have drained the capital from the land, and the farmer is poor;—poor with rising rent and rising wages, and without the means of putting that into his land which alone will enable him in times like these, to cultivate with profit. Meet high rents and high wages with high farming, the Rennes correspondent cries to the poor farmers of Brittany. I travelled a few days since with a French Inspector-General of Agriculture. His song was that of the Rennes correspondent. An intelligent, liberal, learned gentleman, he contrasted the agricultural prosperity of England—the high farming of England—with that of his own country. A conceited little naval officer sat near him, and seemed to be piqued at the idea that any Frenchman should admit there was an institution or an interest in England in a better condition than any French institution or interest. The Inspector-General shrugged his shoulders, and said, "It's a question of money, of investment, *voilà tout.*" And then he gave the relative consumption of manures, of guano, &c., of the two countries. "The English understand the affair better than we do," he added. "You must sow to reap, and you must manure to

reap. "To manure, you must have plenty of money." There is little or no money in the agricultural districts. Hence the farmers' distress, and the depressed condition of French agriculture. There is still a large party in the Empire who attribute the actual agricultural crisis to Free Trade, and declare that this Free Trade is distasteful both to buyer and seller. Neither are content. But as Henri Baudrillart has observed in the *Journal des Dèbats,* "Has anybody ever seen either buyer or seller in a state of content? Throughout my life I have heard the merchant say that business was bad, and the buyer, that prices were too high. Long after, when I have asked these merchants (retired from business on large fortunes), why they had always complained, they have answered, that they meant, business might have been even better than it was."

CHAPTER XII.

THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF BRITTANY.

THERE are some delightful bits of old street architecture in Rennes; broken up corners of ancient lath and plaster dwellings; gloomy, overshadowing black timber-roofs; stacks of buildings leaning at extraordinary angles, against each other; narrow streets darkened with jutting poles, and all manner of fantastic timber work; *cafés*, with little rough wooden doors. The quays that stretch along the canal are broad and spacious, and hereabouts, the pick-axe and the trowel are at work. The high, uniform, white stone houses of the Second Empire are peeping up in all directions, and covering old lath and plaster Rennes. The Palais de Justice was the most interesting old building I saw, not even excluding the Cathedral. There was a quaint ancient air in the passages of the Palace, blocked in three or four directions with

gnarled logs of firewood. The figures of Breton men and women of the working class passing in all directions, and chattering vehemently over their cases; the men in their short tight jackets and their broad felt hats, ornamented with a large buckle,—the women short-waisted and high-capped; made a scene in these dim, cold, quiet galleries, that seemed to belong to a remote time. But the new is covering the old at a great rate. The fine new Lycée Imperiale by the quays, is a specimen of the Rennes that is to be. The boys who are at work under its roof will see a Rennes as prim and free from historical relics as Pimlico.

There is an exquisitely picturesque, tumbledown, crazy and poverty striken old Court or Alley by the Rue de Toulouse, and at a stone's throw from the Hotel de Ville. The lath and plaster houses, with their vast, black overhanging roofs, pitch and lean or fall back, or are half sunk in the earth. You cannot comprehend how it is that they hold together, or that people have the hardihood to trust themselves in the sloping rooms. There was one old house jammed in a corner between two old walls, that was little more than the shell—the skeleton of a building. The plaster walls had fallen from the beams, the

windows had tumbled out—aye, the roof was gone! But people were living in this extraordinary confusion of timbers and tiles. The roofless top seemed to be a beggar's summer-house, and showed signs of vegetation. There were some oleanders, and other plants flourishing amid lines of drying clothes. The staircase was laid open by the falling of the walls to the street. It had a ghastly look like an exposed artery, laid bare by the knife. A timid stranger would be afraid of passing near it lest it should overwhelm him. Yet there were people to whom it was a home. Against an old shiny green wall hard by was a vegetable stall;—a narrow roof covered with a fungus growth, and from which some wall-flowers were spreading with rank luxuriance, protected the buxom white-capped countrywoman, who sat by her leeks and onions and pumpkins. Before the tumbledown houses, opposite and right and left, were piled many varieties of cheap wares, rows of enormous sabots, strings of goose wings, heaps of blouses, coarse crockery, old caps, rat-traps, buckets;—and behind them, brown old women sat knitting stockings or gossiping. Strange old men in all kinds of patched dresses, shuffled about. One bent veteran of eighty wore a calf's skin coat, and upon his head the ragged hood of a soldier's cloak.

Let me recommend any traveller who may chance this way to visit the Place Ste. Anne. That is the most extraordinary scene of lath and plaster in the latest stages of decay, I have ever gazed upon. You feel inclined to run swiftly out of the neighbourhood, lest the Place Ste. Anne and its surroundings should fall about your ears. Some original speculator has just dropped in the midst of this chaos of houses a new Hotel, which he calls the *Hôtel du Bout du Monde.*

I was often reminded of Rouen as I strolled about Rennes; not by the word Rouennerie painted everywhere on the haberdasher's shops, but by the mixture of the old and the new, of the modern iron and stone, and the ancient black timber and plaster. This timber and plaster must have been very solidly put together by the Lamballais of the ancient times. Some of the industries carried on in the narrower streets, are peculiar. The depots of leeches appear to flourish. The doctors have not done bleeding, hereabouts. A little cupboard of a shop was entitled an *Entreprise,* for the purification of bed-feathers. Two colossal grinders painted on a chocolate wall indicated a dentist's whereabouts. Humble *Cafés Armoricains* abound, and so do the *charcutiers,* and butter, and vegetable, and oyster shops. There are

vast stores of the now famous Camembert cheese, neatly packed in straw. Lehagre, farmer at Coëtlogon, near Rennes, does a brisk business in Camembert *à la crême*. The oysters are in deep baskets as at Havre, and are packed in seaweed. The poultry is plump, but then this is the centre of great agricultural doings. Close at hand is the farm of *La Prévalaie*, renowned for its excellent butter, and at Rennes there are great transactions in the poultry of Zanzé. The artillerymen lounging about every street, the officers, chattering round their *café* by the Palais de Justice, the saunterers along the Boulevart by the river-side, and the promenaders of all classes, including crowds of Breton nurses with their snowy aprons and caps, in charge of gorgeously dressed children who gather round the artillery band on the esplanade by the barracks, that commands a fine view of the surrounding country :—these, with the light colours and clear air of the place, give it a festive, a gay aspect. There is an easy, flourishing manner about the people. They are light and independant; and in the market the women seem to have met chiefly for the purpose of enjoying each other's lively conversation, rather than for the transaction of the business on which their bread depends. Easily

flows the life in my Hôtel. I found that it was the head quarters of commercial travellers, and I saw mounds of cases and boxes always standing in the Hall. But the guests of the Hôtel de France were always lounging about its great court-yard, making and smoking cigarettes. The men at the *Messagerie*, also in the Hôtel-yard, harnessed their horses at their leisure, making frequent pauses to point their conversation. The Hôtel *Café* in the corner of the yard was a lively scene from nine o'clock in the morning to past eleven at night. The Hôtel customers incessantly streamed in and out. The commercial travellers who were up betimes, returned humming and puffing little cigarettes, between ten and eleven, to a copious breakfast consisting of cutlets, ham, sheep's trotters cooked in a savoury way, haricot mutton, poached eggs, the inevitable Camembert, and apples and figs, and dried fruit: accompanied with litre decanters of cider. I watched an elderly gentleman perform upon a semi-circle of these dishes placed before him by the waiter. With a long pole of bread at his elbow, he opened upon the poached eggs. Thence he proceeded systematically along the semi-circle of dishes, neglecting none, and pausing only to cut away another thick section of the bread pole, or to re-invigorate himself with a tumbler of cider. He came briskly up at the

end over an apple that was as large as a cat's head, and despatched this without the least apparent distress. When he had quite finished eating, he called for some wine, and drank off a glass. By this time he was a little red in the face. I felt inclined to beg him to stop, and to assure him that I was quite satisfied with his prowess. But, dear me! This was only his ordinary breakfast, and he testified his unconcern by trotting off, twirling his tooth-pick between his teeth. Another gentleman, whom I saw go through all the stages of a Rennes dinner, satisfied me afterwards that the breakfast of the elderly gentleman, at which I had assisted, was a very ordinary performance indeed.

After breakfast there was a general adjournment to the little café, where coffee, and cigarettes, and brisk conversation, to say nothing of billiards, and cards, and dominoes, were enjoyed by the easy French gentlemen of the road. They were, in their way, a dissipated, bibulous set; addicted to any number of *choppes*, of *vermouths*, or *absinthes*. They seemed to smoke indifferently cigarettes, cigars, or pipes; and to talk to the first comer, whether they had ever seen him in their lives before, or not. Their manners were decidedly wanting, both in repose and in grace.

Over a game of bezig, for a cigar or a glass of ale, they could get up a fierce excitement. When they met again in the evening, the doings of the afternoon at bezig, or at the billiard-table, were recounted with extraordinary energy. I assisted at one of these evenings. I think I was the only individual in the café, except the hotel-keeper himself, who was not a commercial traveller. I remarked that the men had many of the characteristics of the English "commercial." Each individual entered with an eccentric independant manner, and did his utmost to appear free-and-easy. One would draw a chair towards a table where bezig was already going on; straddle across it, plant his arms upon the chair-back, tip his hat off his forehead, and watch the game. Another would hum "*Entre Paris et Lyons,*" or *Rien n'est sacré pour un Sapeur,*" or some other lyric of the hour. In this company, who gave themselves Paris airs, and affected a disdain of the provincial that was most entertaining, there was the leading boaster. He was a showily-dressed man, with fair bushy whiskers. As far as appearance was concerned, he might have passed for an English traveller. But the vehemence of his movements, his rapid talk, and his ostentatious egotism and conceit,

were French. He made his evening entrance to a lively air, and was received with a shout from his companions. One man, from a corner, called for his revenge, whereupon the boaster entered upon a rapid and glowing history of his morning's exploits.

"Revenge!" said he. "You have had it. Figure to yourselves," he added, addressing the general company,—"that I won from him this morning my bock and my vermouth. He insisted upon his revenge: I gave it him. We played for a Londrès." With a theatrical gesture the boaster withdrew a cigar from his breast-pocket.

"There it is! there is his revenge!"

Then he held the cigar to his ear. "It's a beauty, *par exemple*," said he. "It sings."

The vanquished foe insisted upon another revenge, and the boaster was at length persuaded by the company to be generous. A furious game of bezig ensued. Everybody crowded round the table, and separated themselves into parties, for and against the boaster. The excitement was intense. At length, after a pause, the boaster leapt up, pushed his way through the crowd into the centre of the *café*, gave three pirouettes, and bowed to the company, with two cigars in his mouth; he had won again!

A morose, drum-major of a man, six foot high, with coal-black moustache and imperial, appeared to take umbrage at the boaster's success. The drum-major travelled in groceries, and was in some sort the boaster's rival or competitor.

"So you don't go to Brest," quoth the drum-major to the winnner at bezig. This was said with a sneer.

"No, Monsieur," the boaster replied with a profound bow. "I *do not* go to Brest, as I had the honour of informing Monsieur this morning."

This was the signal for a wordy onslaught on the boaster, who defended himself, however, with great tenacity and tact.

"Why should I go to Brest, while there are eighty or ninety people dying of cholera every day? What business is doing when nearly everybody has a death in the house? I might pick up some two thousand francs' worth of orders. Is it worth risking one's life for that?"

"Or what is there on four or five thousand francs' worth of orders?" the drum-major retorted sarcastically. "A trifle! Monsieur had better not risk his life, especially when we are told that those

who are afraid of the cholera are most likely to catch it."

The boaster protested that he had not the least fear; he was only prudent. Besides, he was free to go to any towns he pleased, and why should he not pick out the healthy ones? This pretentious statement raised a chorus of protests. Was not the boaster confined to a radius? Had he not his list of towns marked out for him by the house for which he travelled? Did any one ever hear of a commercial traveller who could go where he pleased? The boaster listened through the hubbub, and then said that there were travellers, and travellers. There were those who had earned the entire confidence of their employers, and there were those who were compelled to submit to terms and rules. Now, he went within a certain circumscription to any town he pleased, and all he had to show his employers was a given amount of business, done every month. In fact, he might be largely in business for himself, only he preferred the freedom, and the gay life of a traveller.

"Ah!" cried the drum-major. "Monsieur would rather be the traveller than the house. It is a taste—that is, at least, *bizarre*."

A little brisk, dapper, curly-hatted traveller interposed—

"However, I shall go to Brest; for I have friends there."

"Friends!" the boaster exclaimed, "I have thousands. Friends! I have them in every corner."

A grave man rose and bowed to the boaster, and said "Monsieur is very lucky!" and sat down again. And now a red-headed little man, who must have been simmering up to boiling point all this time, leapt to his feet, raised his hat, and with a sweep placed it upon the table. He was in a violent state of excitement; but he had only to say he had the honour to inform the company that no commercial man was bound to travel to a city where the cholera was raging. He knew a commercial friend who went to Marseilles in the cholera time, and was *pincé*. He had it for two days, and was glad to make his escape. With this statement, the excited individual sat down and mopped his head and face.

After this thrilling incident, the drum-major said that the excited Monsieur was perhaps right; people who were nervous did best to keep away from the danger.

"Nervous!" cried the boaster, "I will let you

know whether I have nerves or not. Why, I was in Paris last year at the height of the cholera time, for six days. One morning I sent out for bread. My *concierge* came back, and told me that the baker—a *bonne grosse femme*—was dead—dead of cholera. This happened in my own *quartier*, and I was there six days. Nervous, indeed!"

The conversation wandered afterwards to the customs of various houses, the tone of each man being one of complete and contemptuous independence of the house for which he travelled. The boaster had left his house twice, and had only been won over to join it again by the supplications of the partners. Then followed a few stories of Parisian deeds of gallantry done by these exquisites of the road, who each affected to think that when he was borne into the provinces by the exigencies of business, the Boulevards des Italiens was deprived of one of its brighter stars. The evening was all over; the cigars were all smoked; the beer, the peppermint water, the rhum, the *sirops* were all despatched by eleven o'clock; at half-past the great rambling hotel, that stretched round the courtyard over coach-houses, and stables, and offices, was in darkness and the bagmen were at rest. They would be up betimes

in the morning, and lounging through the great gateway to business with cigarettes in their mouths; and very early in the morning, mine host would be on his feet, gliding smoothly and cheerily through another day.

The railway-omnibus man who drove me to the station from Rennes was a happy lively old man, and carried me along that road, which he must travel a dozen times every day, as though every point of it were a charming novelty to him.

CHAPTER XIII.

SAINT BRIEUC.

1866.

THERE will be rejoicing along these shores, from Dunkerque to Brest; there will be strange commotion on the banks of the Dieppe oyster grounds, as there will be rejoicings along our southern shores, when the conclusions of the royal commissioners of enquiry into our sea-fisheries shall have been made known among Kentish and Sussex and Norman and Breton fishermen. The commissioners proclaim, after patient inquiry into the results of coercive measures, and the puzzling articles of the Anglo-French Convention for the protection of the fisheries of the two countries, that it is best to repeal all Acts of Parliament which profess to regulate or restrict the modes of fishing pursued in the open sea. "Unrestricted freedom of fishing" is the *régime* which the commissioners recommend

after having studied the irritating correspondence which has been carried on since 1852 between the English and French Governments on the infractions of the convention perpetually committed, chiefly by the Colchester oyster-boats. The terms of the convention were so complicated and confused, that they appeared designed to produce conflicts between the two countries. The French cruisers took the Colchester boats into Dieppe or Havre, where they were detained three or four days. Evidence of their transgression of the law was drawn up, and presented for signature to the British Consul, which signature he uniformly declined to make; so that the Colchester men went unpunished because English magistrates would not receive the French statement while it was uncertified by the English Consul of the French port in which it had been drawn up. The consequence was that the English boats, after four days' detention in a French port for infraction of the convention, sailed out and actually recommitted their transgression, under the eyes of French fishermen, who could not imitate the British audacity, for the very strong reason that these, being amenable to French laws, would speedily meet their punishment. This grievance, which has justly

irritated the French Government for years, and which has caused some acrid letters to pass between Count Walewski and Lords Malmesbury and Clarendon, is, if the recommendations of the royal commissioners should be acted upon, to disappear before complete free trade. The commissioners advise that all restrictions which prevent foreign fishermen from entering British or Irish ports, for the sale of fish, be removed in Great Britain and Ireland, and that measures be taken to secure the like freedom for British fishermen in foreign ports. The importance of this resolution can be understood only by those persons who have closely watched the operation of the laws which have been from time to time framed for the protection by restrictions of open sea and inshore fisheries. These laws and regulations have been a fruitful source of contentious, giving no compensation for the quarrels they produced in the shape of useful protection to sea-fisheries, or benefit to fishermen. There have been cries in many quarters for more stringent laws—for severer restrictions. People were frightened by statements that our fishing grounds were failing, and that the trawlers were recklessly destroying the source of that food which is the physical salvation of our poorer classes. The

commissioners have heard the complaints of drift-net fishermen against trawl-net fishermen, and the defence of these alleged destructives. They had before them pilchard-seine, or circle-net fishermen, in controversy with drift-net fishermen. They have heard what line fishermen have to say against trammel nets; they have listened to bean-trawlers and long-line fishermen, and they have patiently questioned the prophets of evil as well as witnesses of sanguine temperament who even put their hope in trawl-nets, and declare, like the fish salesman, James Page, that the more the bottom of a fishing ground is trawled over the better it is. And the commissioners' conclusion is that absolute freedom is the best law that can be set over the sea-fisheries, not only of the United Kingdom, but of every other kingdom.

It is beyond all doubt ridiculous that, while our fishermen and the fishermen of this coast are restricted and compelled to observe a three-mile limit from the shore, Belgian and Dutch boats may, not being fettered by any international treaty engagements, fish when or where or in what manner they like. In parting from all restrictions over fishermen, England and France will be only following—

and at a distance—the example set by the Dutch nine years ago. Down to 1857 the Dutch fisheries were protected, or rather burdened, with many regulations. Places of fishing, lines, and nets were all under severe rules. So severely were the fisheries protected that, like over-nursed children, they languished. In 1857 the Dutch, seeing an industry debilitated by being swathed in legal bandages, cut them all away, and sent forth their fishing-boats upon the ocean free as the sea-gulls. At once the industry recovered its strength and prospered, and now the anxiety of Dutch fishermen is not as to the catch, but as to new profitable outlets for the sale of their fish. The only restriction the Dutch Government have maintained is the branding of their herring barrels; this brand being a token of a specific mode of cure, which gives value to the herrings in the market, as our Scotch brand is a token of the quality of the herrings in the markets of Poland, Bohemia, Austria, and Russia.

Yet we English and French are debating about nets, and irritating ourselves over a controversy on the influence of shrimp fishing over flounders! We have cruisers in the Channel prying into the tackle and measuring the whereabouts of fishing-smacks.

We have Orders in Council about the removal of oysters from one private ground to another. Every oyster is protected by a license from unceremonious removal from its native bed to a foreign ground. Even a special license is necessary in some cases, as when in the "close season" Irish oysters that have been recruiting strength and making flesh at Falmouth are removed to the Thames. We have restrictions of "doubtful legality," which operate upon the south coast, while on the east coast, within the limit and in the estuary of the Thames, people dredge and sell oysters exactly as they please. We have compelled the cessation of summer dredging; the consequence is that oyster grounds have been covered with weeds and slub, in which the spat has been choked. This injurious restriction does not, however, account for the failure of late years in the yield of oysters, albeit it has done a good share of the harm. It seems to be decided that the failure of the oyster-spat has been general everywhere. A brood that four years ago was worth only five shillings the "wash," was worth twenty shillings at the beginning of last year. Our dredging and the taking of young oysters may partially account for the actual scarcity, but the failure of spat is the main cause of

the deficiency. The failure of brood has been remarked by the oyster fishermen in the deep Channel beds, where, however, the stock is so immense that no diminution of take has yet been experienced. "Channels" are still plentiful; and, being large and coarse, are said to be in great demand at fairs and races throughout the country. It is these oysters which are exported from Newhaven to the northern ports of France where there are *parcs*. The Kentish and Essex beds for small oysters also find their way to France, many of them being dredged by Jersey boats that are not particular in observing the legal restriction as to size.

We are naturally surprised to find that the articles of the Anglo-French Convention which regulate the Channel oyster fisheries, as well as our own laws which operate on our coast, are in opposition to the system which has been pursued in the estuary of the Thames from ancient times, and which has produced, and does produce, abundant crops of the finest oysters in the world. In these fisheries the brood is dredged regardless of the season of the year or of the age of the fish, to be laid down on the private beds on the coast of Kent and Sussex—beds that are the property of individuals or companies. Among these oyster

fisheries are the well-known ones of Whitstable and Faversham, and Colchester and Burnham. These great sources of oyster supply are replenished by summer dredging for brood on the public grounds off the Kentish and Essex coasts. But this brood has failed of late years, as it has failed in other directions, not by over-dredging, but from natural causes, which have not been ascertained. It may have been smothered or devoured by unusual swarms of five-fingers. But the season of dearth which has raised the price of oysters to an extravagant figure will pass away, it is the belief of the Colchester and Whitstable fishermen; and the reappearance of the spat on the public grounds will make the private fisheries in the estuaries of the Thames once more the most productive oyster-beds in the world.

It will be, I apprehend, interesting to the English public at this time to contrast the manner in which oyster fisheries are carried on in this Bay of St. Brieuc, and indeed all along the Norman and Breton coast, with the ancient Whitstable Corporation or Guild of Fishermen, and the licensed oyster fishermen of Colchester. At the same time it cannot be uninteresting to us to ascertain how far the French are prepared to reciprocate the complete free trade in

fish which the royal commissioners have proposed. The importance of fish as an article of food has been pressed upon public attention by the increased price of meat. The highly valuable properties of fish, and its inexhaustible abundance, must, as scientific knowledge is spread, compel Governments to do all that in them lies to promote the growth of fisheries, and to clear away the heavy duties that are levied in some of the continental states on fish—which, when combined with oil, butter, or bacon, is the only complete substitute for butcher's meat. The late Professor Johnston analysed some of the more plentiful fishes of our waters.

He found that, in the common sea fishes—as the skate, the haddock, and the herring, the nutritious element greatly preponderated over the warmth-imparting element. Skate, for instance, consists of 97 parts of fibrin to three parts of fat. The haddock and herring contain 92 parts of fibrin to eight of fat, while the salmon, a sea and river fish, has only 78 parts of fibrin to 22 of fat. In fresh water fish, the warming element preponderates, as in the eel, where the fat is in the proportion of 56 parts to 44 of fibrin. According to Professor Johnston's analyses, salmon is the fish the nutritious proportions of which make

the nearest approach to those of butcher's meat. Dr. Joseph Brown, observing on the deficiency of the fatty or warming element in sea fish, suggests that its corrective is found in the oily matter which all fish-eaters associate with it, either as a sauce or in its cookery. He observes:—"In our climate, butter; in Italy, Portugal, and other southern European realms, where the olive grows and is fruitful, oil is the associate. It was my lot, in the very early part of this century, to dwell for years in one of the realms mentioned—Portugal. The main and substantial food of her population—and they were 3,000,000—was fish fried in oil. Their subsidiary food was fruit, of which, especially of oranges, they had abundance, and bread. Flesh-meat was never tasted, nor even thought of, among the peasantry of the land. Their beverage was their thin country wine. I found them a vigorous, hardy, and eminently brave people, the worthy allies of Britons in many a well-fought field. This is testimony, derived from long and extensive observation, to the nutritious power of fish. I cannot help looking forward with confidence to the day when the fish of our streams, and especially that of the ocean, which murmurs round our rocks, will contribute much more largely than it now does to

supply a well-ascertained want of the people of England." The doctor attaches no undue importance to fish as an element in the food supply of the people. It is most satisfactory to know that the fish which the Billingsgate salesmen describe as offal is the highly nutritious fish, and that the increased means of conveying the commoner descriptions of fish to market has put an end to the old waste, when it was not unusual to throw away half the fish caught on a voyage. "Now," said a great Billingsgate salesman, "we don't throw away a fish's eye. Some of our baskets may only fetch 8s., whilst others will fetch £3 or £4. We have food for the poor, and food for the rich." There has been a gradual increase in the price of the better kinds of fish of late years, in France as well as in England. The markets of the fish salesmen have been infinitely extended by the railways. In the summer months a considerable supply of soles is sent daily from the London fish-market to Paris. Fish is now an ordinary article of consumption in inland towns, but the price has not risen so fast as the increase in the demand; for the good reason, that the fisherman's ocean fields are unlimited, and that all he has to do in order to increase his harvest is to work a larger vessel and a

greater sweep of fishing gear. The increased demand has raised a some-time poor depressed industry into a flourishing and ever-increasing one. We are told that the number of British fishermen has nearly doubled within the last twenty years. So great has been the increased supply, that even in Manchester the price of fish has not increased during the last seven years, while some varieties, as plaice and brill, have actually decreased. The supply of this precious food would appear to be inexhaustible. We are told that on the western part of the Dogger Bank it is not uncommon for a single trawl vessel to take, in a three hours' trawl, from two to three tons' weight of fish. A smack owner has mentioned a recent case in which five of his vessels caught seventeen tons of fish in one night. Then there is the famous Rye Bay, where fishermen of these coasts trawl in company with British fishermen, and secure immense takes. But Norman and Breton fishermen have not kept pace with their British brethren, and the Paris fish supply bears no reasonable proportion to that of London, which consumes as great a weight of fish as of beef. The supply of both capitals is capable of vast increase, before which the actual ridiculous prices charged by the retailer would fall. This

retail-dealer gets an enormous profit. The butcher is a most reasonable trader when compared with the fishmonger. One-fifth of the German Ocean, between England and the shores of Normandy is occupied by banks that together equal the superficial area of Ireland. This immense fishing-ground will yield to both countries more food per acre in a week than the richest land can yield of corn in a year. The seventeen tons' weight of fish which, as mentioned above, one smack owner reaped in a single night, is reckoned as an amount of wholesome food equal in weight to that of fifty cattle or three hundred sheep. The conclusion which the royal commissioners have reached is incontrovertible. They say:—"There are few means of enterprise that present better chances of profit than our sea-fisheries, and no object of greater utility could be named than the development of enterprise, skill, and mechanical ingenuity, which might be elicited by the periodical exhibitions and publications of an influential society, specially devoted to the British fisheries"—and to foreign fisheries also, I would respectfully suggest. I have already drawn the reader's attention to the depressed condition of the fisheries on this north coast of France. The fishermen of Dieppe and Le Pollet look with less

favour on their vocation year after year. They lead laborious days and nights, and earn less than in days gone by. They are suffering from that depression which was experienced by British fishermen some thirty years ago. The trawlers have not been their enemies. They have suffered, and are suffering, from want of capital and enterprise. They want free, quick ways to new markets. They want a system of fish supply for Paris and other great towns. They want, in short, free trade, not only as regards the foreigner, but throughout their native land.

An international exhibition of fishing tackle and boats, with all plans and systems for the preservation or culture, or taking of fish, is announced to be held at Boulogne during this spring, (1866). Such an exhibition may be turned to good account by the fishermen of the two countries. Hereat, trawling, open and close seasons, the regulation of fishing grounds, the effect on larger fish of shrimping, ostreo-culture, French and English methods of rearing and fattening and greening the oyster, the value of the brand in the herring trade, the better methods of packing and keeping fish, the creation of inland fish markets—these are among the subjects which would fall, with advantage to sea-fisheries generally,

within the scope of a fisherman's congress. Fishermen of the north have something to learn from their brethren of the south of Europe. The oyster trawlers of the English and French coasts may possibly get a hint from the fishermen of Minorca, who dive upon the oyster beds. There is surely much to learn from the divers authorities who have had experience of the culture of the oyster from the time of Sergius Orata to the year when M. Coste began his experiments. The history of oyster culture in the Lake Fusaro (the Acheron of Homer) is full of interest and of instruction. It is a history that led to the first attempt at the artificial production of oysters, which was made, at the instigation of M. Coste, in this fine bay in the spring of 1858. In April of this year three millions of "mother oysters" were laid in the Bay of St. Brieuc. They were brought from Caucale or Trequier, and some from the open sea. Eight years have passed since these three millions of mollusks went to the bottom to distribute their spat and create a vast nursery of food. Let us see what has become of them and their progeny.

There is a scarred, weather-beaten, wounded old fisherman dwelling at the mouth of the Gouët at the exact point where the river empties itself into the

Bay of St. Brieuc. His long straggling hut, with a series of uncouth additions holding to it in all directions like barnacles upon a ship, is a capital specimen of a prosperous fisherman's home. The outer walls are ornamented with patterns made out in shells of various kinds, but chiefly in oyster shells. One broad, unbroken wall is given up to the delineation of a gigantic anchor drawn with the same handy and suggestive materials. This strange straggling place, with butts, and baskets, and poles, and spars, and masts tumbled and piled about it, is on the very brink of the steep shore; and under the little windows lie dancing lightly on the rapid tide the little fleet of dredging and fishing boats. Beyond stretches the bay, well protected by the hills. A tiny white pier dips timidly as a lady's foot, into the sea. A small lighthouse guides the hardy fishermen to the Gouët. A grand, rugged, deeply-veined eminence dominates the whole scene, crowned by the ruins of the ancient tower of Cesson, all that remains of a mighty fortress raised by Duke John IV. in the 14th century. This broken tower is all that withstood the explosion, when, by order of Henry IV., a mine was laid under the fortress to destroy it. The tower is now a useful landmark to the pilots. No less than

600 ships pass it every year on their way to the port of le Légue, which is not more than a quarter of a mile up the river. The port of le Légue is engaged chiefly in the Newfoundland cod-fishery. About 40 ships leave this port every year for Newfoundland, and then repair to the southern ports of France and to the ports of Italy, with their fish.

The ancient mariner, the exterior of whose habitation I have described, is the oracle of the little fishing village, which is thrust in a disorderly, but picturesque, way in the fissures and indentations of the rocks. His rambling domain stands apart, as I have said, on the very brink of the shore. He is as near the sea as he can possibly get. As I approached the village he was standing at his door. A strongly-knit frame; vast, brown, gnarled, and knotted hands; a merry eye, set in a face almost beaten black by storms innumerable; a broad, sensuous mouth; a coarse blue guernsey, drawn over the body; a great woollen comforter, drawn again and again, almost to the compass of a life preserver, round the throat; a pair of prodigious wooden *sabots* upon the feet; and for a crown, a bulky, shapeless fur-cap that had had many a sea bath. This was the figure that shambled stiffly forward to offer me welcome and hospitality.

The interior of the mariner's home was more perplexing than its exterior. To begin with, it was all in a deep gloom. Everything in it appeared to be of a dark umber tint. I could perceive on entering, however, that the mariner had an eye to business on shore as well as afloat. He was *restaurateur* and tobacco merchant. Some little brass scales glittered upon a rough counter in the darkness. There were boxes and canisters, and broken brown-paper packets of the cheapest cigars of the *régie*. I was led (and it was necessary to be led) into the common room—a low, long, dark place, with black benches and forms in it, and two or three windows not much larger than a child's slate. At the end was a great deep hearth, where a wood fire was smouldering, and in the corner of which was the stool, sacred always to the use of mine host, the sagacious mariner. Two windows had been cut in the end of this strange cabin for the convenience of our marine, who could see through them, without stirring from his chimney-corner, all that was going on afloat at the mouth of the river, and every sail that approached it or left it.

He was a bluff, familiar, hearty, cunning host, was this same Breton mariner. He motioned me to a stool opposite him at the great fire, and began by

telling me that the *bourgeoise* (his wife) had gone up to the town to market. Then, turning to one of two village girls, whose big white caps looked like snow-flakes in the darkness—"Now, child," he said, "I'll make the soup."

His face lit up at the bare idea; and then he unfolded a list of the good things he could offer me. He had everything of the best, and had got this best under peculiar circumstances. He had a few glasses of Malaga—but such Malaga as it was not often given to ordinary mortals to taste—left in the last bottle. Madeira! He should like to see his Madeira matched. He would make a soup equal to any to be had in the best restaurants of Paris. He turned to a man in a blouse, who sat apart silently drinking anything that was offered to him, to support any of his boastful sentiments; and he refreshed this man with occasional drops of brandy or anything that was at hand. He helped himself also pretty freely. He smoked the cigars with a relish, and, when he opened his huge mouth to receive one, I thought it must be lost in the cavity. He dipped his shaggy head towards a cask in the corner. That was brandy, but it lasted him only a very short time. I was compelled to take a glance at the store-room—an

indescribable confusion of casks and tubs, and boxes, and bottles. The mariner's eyes glowed like live coals from his chimney-corner, as he watched my expression of astonishment. It was not under his roof you would die of hunger, he said. As he dwelt on his copious stores, he gently twisted a large iron kettle, or saucepan, in the flames of the wood fire. This was the opening operation of his soup manufacture. When the iron cauldron was quite hot, he threw a plateful of butter into it, and chuckled, and looked round at us, as it hissed and spurted. In a few minutes a dish of vegetables was brought in by a stout country lass, and pitched into the melted butter. The delight of the mariner increased, and he rubbed his great hands, and chuckled in his throat. The progress of the soup made him garrulous; and many a good story of stormy nights by that river's mouth, and of tough fights with that raging sea, did he pour out while he stirred the cauldron with a long metal spoon. He was known far and wide for his daring and skill as a sailor, and for his shrewdness and sharpness as a business man ashore. A St. Brieuc man, who knew him well, afterwards said to me, of my Breton mariner, "Had he not been so fond of the law he would have been

rich long before this." I remembered that the chief story he told me himself over the fat fumes of his cauldron was of a voyage he had made alone to Brest to surprise a debtor. He had been puzzling himself all day how he should get at him. The railway was not open then. By land the journey would be costly. Thinking over it, he saw a trim little boat of his riding merrily at her moorings. It was getting towards night. The wind was rising. Not many would have ventured out; but he thought to himself, it is not the first time I have been out in a stormy night, and this way it will cost me nothing, and I shall drop upon my man when he least expects me. Without saying a word to anybody, and making some excuse to his wife, he dropped into his boat, with a couple of bottles of wine and a bag of food; and was off. Let the reader glance at the map, and at the north-west corner of France, west of St. Malo, he will find the Bay of St. Brieuc. Then let him follow the broken and dangerous coast thence to Brest. This voyage did the Breton mariner accomplish alone in his little boat, after, as he said, the toughest fight he ever had with the sea. His hands were worked and torn to pieces.

The commandant of the port at Brest could hardly

believe his eyes when he saw him land. On his way a brig had spoken him, thinking he must be in distress, or escaped from a wreck. But he had answered that he was all right, and had only begged them to let him down a bottle of wine and some biscuit by a rope.

"And I found my man." So the mariner ended his story, in which he showed himself to be a hardy and skilful seaman, and a redoubtable creditor.

After a few pints of boiling water had been poured into the soup cauldron, there was a tasting bout, which ended in several additions of salt and pepper, &c. At this point a very old man, with a little, ruddy, but shrunken face, almost hidden under the shadows of his Breton hat, hobbled up to the mariner. The man in the blouse nodded at me furtively from his corner, as much as to say, "Here you will find our friend in the meshes of the law again." The old man was the mariner's servant. The mariner was eager for news. The poor old man was toothless, and seemed overcome with fatigue, and had the greatest difficulty in getting out his story. But it appeared at last that our mariner had been summoned, with his servant, before the *juge de paix*. According to the mariner's explanation, a quantity

of oil from a lantern had been spilt over himself and his old servant; and for this wrong which he had suffered the *juge de paix* had imposed on him a fine of one franc and a half. I strongly suspect that my friend, returning home possibly between more than *deux vins*, had upset the plaintiff's wall-lantern. I should explain that in this primitive corner of France, where the people's habits are much the same as they were centuries ago, the inhabitants hook a lantern against their walls by night. In the dark and tortuous streets of old St. Brieuc the little lanterns against the walls, here indicating a rude *café* and there a small grocer's or baker's shop, make a most curious and puzzling effect, as they are at various heights and unequal distances. According to my host, the *gredin* of a judge had fined him for having spoiled his clothes with lamp-oil; and, judging from the suit which the defendant wore when I had the honour of making his acquaintance, it would take all the oil a very substantial lamp could conveniently hold to make much obvious effect upon them.

Our mariner was a very good fellow at heart; only he was excessively vain and boastful. His two little children bounced up to him from school, carrying prodigious slices of bread and butter, and wanted

to know when the soup would be ready. Their frank and fearless manner showed at once what kind of a man their father was. His strong vibrating voice fell to a hoarse whisper when he said: "There is all I have left. The rest are gone." Then he related to me how he was sending them to school, how he should leave them bread to eat; then how, again, his poor brother's children had been left on his hands. He had to look after them. One would absolutely be a priest, and nothing else; another would start a little *cabaret* in the roadside cottage which belonged to them, and which he should have fitted up for him. It was, indeed, curious to mark the wise forethought, and to follow the prudent plans, of this rough weather-beaten fisherman, who was perched here, apart from the world on this wild coast, with fishermen for his chief companions. He could read and write, he had picked up some Norwegian and some English from the sailors of le Légue. His English was a ridiculous mixture of the coarsest sailors' slang, and, I presume, the corresponding slang of his Norwegian teachers. He had lived in London, he told me, two years; and, he added, he could write English perfectly well.

But this was a boast made, I think, to dazzle the man in the blouse.

I dwell on the habitation and experience of this Breton mariner because they show how Fortune smiles in the unlikeliest places when patience and prudence woo her. This mariner was owner of five of the fleet of boats under his humble windows. All his life he had been steadily fighting, and was still fighting, by sea and land, for worldly goods; taking care never to remove himself from the class to which he originally belonged, nor to put on a set of expensive habits that would consume in his leisure, any of the fruit of his labour. He had fisherman's simple habits (he told me they occasionally added fish to the soup, when it became magnificent) with the trading man's cunning and prudence. His energy must have been prodigious. No wonder he had a shambling gait. He had had both his legs crushed in some accident between two boats, and he showed me that they were still tightly bandaged from the ancle to the knee; and he assured me that they had been in this condition for years. They troubled him so much that he never went to bed, but slept always perched up in a chair. How-

ever, he had been accustomed to sleep in positions far less comfortable than this. He was as handy now in a boat as he had ever been—as he was when he found the dog. The dog in question was a shaggy Scotch terrier, who had taken a great fancy to me from the moment I reached his master's fireside. It appeared that our mariner had picked the poor animal off the deserted wreck of a north country brig some years ago. Master and dog were great friends, and it struck me that the dog was attracted to me by hearing me speak English to its master when I was testing the mariner's knowledge of my native tongue. The English words or tones possibly struck a chord in the poor brute's memory; at least I thought so at the time, and record the impression. Here was a man who could earn a dinner for his family by sea or land, and could cook it when he had earned it. I had never before seen so complete a combination of the hearty, daring, hardy sailor and the hair-splitting, covetous trader. Referring, later in our interview, to his stormy run to Brest, he finished it off by telling me that he had sold the boat in which he made the trip, to a shallow-witted neighbour for 150f., and that it was not worth 150 sous.

Experience had taught me that it was necessary to be very discreet, and to approach my subject delicately and gradually, in order to get the best information out of an acute worldly fellow like my friend the Breton mariner; for the Breton, like the Norman, will not know much if you directly ask him a few questions about the agriculture, or industry, or commercial progress of his country. It is surprising, indeed, to find how little any man knows in this or the neighbouring province about anything surrounding him that is foreign to his *métier*. Being located at the Hotel of the White Cross, perched at the highest point of St. Brieuc (the hotel which is recommended in the *Indicateur*), I took an early opportunity of asking a Briochin a few questions about the industry of St. Brieuc. "*Dame*, there is none!" I remarked that there was a port in the valley far below. He granted that there was le Légue, and that there were ships there, and some of them went to fish for cod. Then I said, "All these fine hill-sides of the Gouët and the Gouëdic, I am told, are remarkable for their prolific vegetable crops. Then your department—the Cotes du Nord—is renowned for its horses." He merely answered that it was true, and he ad-

mitted that there were quarries of blue granite worked in the *faubourg* of the Gouëdic. He admitted, in fine, that my information was correct, but he would or could not add anything to it.

He was particular in his inquiry as to the reason why Monsieur desired all these details. I think he was amused, (having discovered that I was not of any trade), at the absurdity of my being interested in any. I hired a man to pilot me down the steep descent by which le Légue is reached from St. Brieuc. I had a delightfully picturesque walk, the road being enlivened by groups of elaborately-capped market women; and presenting at each winding of its precipitous course, fresh and delightful variations of hill and dale. When we reached the quays of le Légue, I began to question my guide on its commerce. He had been recommended to me as a remarkably intelligent, well-informed man. But he knew nothing about le Légue, nothing about the oyster fishery or culture; in short, he was just as instructive as my first Briochin. He did know that most of the ships in harbour went to Newfoundland to fish; but here his knowledge of le Légue ended. I tried him in many ways as we passed along the banks of the Gouët. But either

his fund of intelligence was impenetrable (being encased in his Breton caution), or he had none. With my friend the mariner I determined to be very cautious. He was said to be the most considerable oyster dealer in this locality, and I had already proved him to be wary and artful under all his bluffness and heartiness of manner. Before me lay the famous Bay of St. Brieuc, which had been described as so admirably adapted in all respects for the propagation and culture of the oyster. Under the windows, by peeping between serried ranks of empty bottles, I could see the little fleet of oyster boats, and at a distance the Government cruiser or *péniche* ready to follow the fleet, and to enforce the observance of the regulations established by Government.

Oyster dredging is carried on on the French coast in boats manned each by four or five men, and armed with four or five dredges. The *péniche* overlooks the fishing, and gives the signal when the dredges are to be hauled in; and the fishing is at an end for the day. These oysters are sorted and deposited in *parcs* or *claires*, as they call them at Marennes, to educate and perfect them for the *gourmet's* market. It is said that the mixture of fresh and salt water, like that which covers the oyster *parcs* of Ostend

and Dieppe, is particularly favourable to the perfection of the flavour of the oyster. Many of the oysters which are greened at Marennes are caught off this and off the Norman coast; but the best Marennes oysters are those which are gathered from the rocks or dredged on the banks of that locality. Oysters carried from other places—from this bay, for instance—and brought up in the *claires* of Marennes, are never equal in flavour to the native Marennes. I may here remark that the difference between an oyster *claire* and an oyster *parc* is this—an oyster *parc* receives fresh water at each tide—that is, it is open always to the ebb and flow; whereas the famous *claires* of Marennes are replenished only at the high tides of the full and new moon.

In 1858, M. Coste described the sad decline of the oyster fisheries on the coasts of France. Of this bay, he remarked emphatically that its solid and invariably clean banks admirably adapted it to be the scene of a most flourishing oyster fishery. He lamented, at the same time, that, owing to the barbarous mode of dredging which had so long been practised, the number of its productive oyster banks had dwindled from fifteen to three. He made

equivalent remarks on the oyster banks of La Rochelle and Marennes, of Rochefort and of the islands of Ré and Oléron. It was these revelations of a declining industry that led to the immersion in this bay of three millions of oysters from Cancale, eight years ago, at the direction and expense of the Government.

In six months, we are told, the bay was covered with spat. The experiment was considered to be so completely successful that the Government repeated it in the roadstead of Toulon, at Cettes, in the Bay of Arcachon, and in the Island of Ré. According to M. Figuier, in the Bay of Arcachon and in the Island of Ré the oyster fishery has taken gigantic proportions, and associations have been long since formed for the methodical cultivation of the oyster in the newly established *parcs*. Two model establishments were set up—one in the Island of Ré, and the other at Arcachon. In the Bay of Arcachon 400 hectares of shore were let out to speculators who had associated themselves with fishermen. Three years since, these fishermen took, in six tides, and off half the cultivated ground, 16,000,000 of oysters—more than both Cancale and Granville yielded that season. In the Island of Ré, M. Coste reports that, under the

learned care of Dr. Kemmerer, and the direction of M. Tayeau, of the imperial navy, the yield of oysters was almost boundless. At the time of his reporting there were some 70,000,000 ready for market. He leaves the public to judge the value of oyster culture after these experiments, reckoning the price of the marketable oyster only at £1 sterling per thousand. M. Felix Hement, a professor at the Chaptal College, visited the model oyster *parc* at Arcachon last August, (1865). According to his printed experience, in this breeding *parc*, disposed in alleys and in hives, which consist of prepared tiles piled one across the other, oyster breeding is carried on with great success. The spat collects in abundance upon these tiles. About 300 young oysters will assemble on each tile, and there are thirty tiles to the hive. This gives a produce of 9,000 oysters to the hive, for each breeding season. There are about 300 of these hives in the *parc*. It is consequently capable of producing more than 2,000,000 of oysters. As soon as the brood has settled on the tiles, and the young oyster is formed, the hives, which are held together by stakes and strings, are dispersed, and the tiles are spread over the bottom of the *parc*. The oysters are, later, detached from the tiles and spread over

the *parc*. When they are three years old they are ripe for consumption. M. Hement shrewdly argues that this *parc*, where the breeding and the culture of the oyster are carried on together, is a great improvement on the more troublesome and wasteful plan of breeding the oysters in open bays, and then carrying them to a distance to be cultivated in *parcs*.

A few words on the green oyster. Professor Hement boldly states as a notorious fact that the greenness of the oyster is produced by sickness, the sickness being the consequence of the oyster's confinement in a basin where there is not a constant change of water. M. Figuier is of a different opinion. Speaking particularly of the perfect Marennes oyster, he says that the green colouring substance which slightly tinges it differs chemically from all the animal or vegetable colouring substances which have been yet analysed. In the intestinal canal of the oyster the green tint is hardly to be detected.

So much for the experience and experiments of the learned—of professors and academicians. I was now in the presence, not of a professor or a scientific man, but of a downright practical, hard-headed fisherman, who had dredged oysters on the St. Brieuc banks, and had driven good bargains in other people's

dredging ashore. His entreaty that I would partake of his soup gave me the opportunity of introducing the oyster question in an off-hand manner. I was afraid I could not manage soup so early in the day, but I could eat a few oysters if any were to be had. Yes, he had oysters. The man in the blouse (who was still sipping brandy offered to him again and again by the mariner) laughed, and said I had come to the right place for oysters at any rate. Presently a pyramid of enormous, rugged, shapeless shells was placed before me, with a knife and a lump of brown bread.

"There are oysters," said the mariner a little contemptuously, "if you prefer them to my soup."

They were just wrenched a little, the upper from the lower shell, so that the consumer could insert his thumbs, and with a long pull and a strong pull draw the shells asunder. The result of this tearing was a mutilated, unsightly fish. But a Frenchman cuts the parts adhering, and tumbles the *débris* into his mouth. Surely these were the famous *pieds de cheval* (*Ostrea hippopus*). The mariner watched me fumbling over the mound of shells with great amusement, urging me the while to try some particularly fine white wine he had, which would strongly recom-

mend them to the stomach. I assented, and was presented with a bottle of very ordinary Bergerac, two-thirds of which the mariner, graciously assisted by the bibulous blouse, did me the honour of consuming. My moment for inquiry had come. I remarked that St. Brieuc was a renowned place for oysters. The mariner shrugged his shoulders and complained of the greenness of the firewood, quoting an old, old proverb—

> "Pain frais et bois vert
> Mettent la maison à travers."

But I stuck to my point. He admitted that St. Brieuc was famous for its oysters. I playfully suggested that perhaps the holy man from Britain who landed here fourteen centuries ago, to preach the Word of God in Armorica, was tempted hither by the fame of the oysters in the bay. The mariner would not be playful on the subject. I proceeded to touch upon the experiments in ostreiculture of late years. Then I mentioned the name of M. Coste. Still the mariner was silent. Yes, he knew M. Coste's name perfectly well. At last I asked directly how it fared in the matter of oysters in the Bay of St. Brieuc? The mariner was now loud and emphatic enough. He

answered, "Before M. Coste's time I sold oysters 6fr. per 1,000. After they had begun I sold them 20fr., 30fr. per 1,000. Then I sold them 40fr., 50fr., per 1,000, and now 60fr.—60fr.," he repeated, holding his finger up before me, and shaking it. This was his answer—the only answer I could get—and it was the best, the amplest information at hand. M. Figuier observes in his excellent work, "La Vie et les Mœurs des Animaux," recently published :— "There was only one danger to the success of ostreiculture in open bays, and it has already overcome some attempts. We mean the violence of the currents which disturb the bottom of the sea. These currents may sometimes carry off the spat, and so take away an entire harvest of oysters. Strong currents appear to have done great harm to the establishments of the Island of Ré." Have they carried off the spat from St. Brieuc also? or is there a failure of *naissain* here, as along our own southern shores? I am sure my Breton will not trouble himself with the inquiry. He possibly thinks that the artificial stocking of banks does more harm than any number of dredges. You see that regulations, laws, and bye-laws have not prevented oysters rising to 50fr. per 1,000, even here!

Shall we convert our neighbours to the idea of complete freedom on all fishing grounds? *Esperons.*

My portrait of the Breton mariner will not be complete without the fact that before I took leave of him he carefully made out his little bill, and included in it, in the most gracious and hearty manner, the expenses of the entire company.

The coasts of Normandy and Brittany are celebrated for the vast quantities of mussels which they yield, under careful cultivation; but into this industry I cannot, for the present at least, enter—much as I am tempted by the learned Figuier, who says: "The mussel is the superior of the oyster in the matter of intelligence."

END OF VOL. II.

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